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60th year of publication

A new future for Uganda's traumatized children?

Uganda village

Earlier this year Uganda held a democratic election that saw the incumbent President Yoweri Museveni chosen to serve a third term as that country's leader. Although the constitution imposed a limit of two terms on the office of president, like Mugabe in Zimbabwe, he persuaded the legislature that he is indispensable, and the constitution was revised to permit him a third term. Several other African countries – Namibia, Chad and Nigeria – are considering similar revisions to the constitution to permit incumbent presidents to run for a third term.

Museveni's election campaign was anything but democratic. He used police to break up opposition rallies before they had hardly begun, and he brought all sorts of bogus charges against the opposition candidate.

However, he continues to be regarded as a hero by many of his countrymen – especially in the south. His 20-year rule has brought stability and relative prosperity there. And he is credited with helping to remove the mad and murderous Idi Amin from power and then to topple the repressive regime of Amin's successor, Milton Obote in 1986 after a civil war.

Museveni's strongman politics, however, is of less concern to the international community than his failure to bring law and order to the northern parts of his country. For almost the entire term of his rule, he has allowed the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), led by the cruelest warlord Africa has ever seen, to terrorize the north.

A U.N. reporter, visiting the country recently, wrote: "Crossing the River Nile to enter northern Uganda is more than just a visible reminder of the immense power of the world's longest river but also a testimony to the divide between two versions of the same country – a war-ravaged north and a much more prosperous south."

In the north, the demented recruits of Joseph Kony have been pillaging, raping, mutilating and butchering people with very little resistance. His campaign has concentrated especially on children, having abducted more than 25,000 of them from the villages to serve as beasts of burden, sex slaves and soldiers. The LRA is often referred to as "rebels," but it is a misnomer, for there seems to be no political purpose to the depredations of his gang of marauders. The Lord his army serves is certainly not the Lord of Scripture, but the Lord of Chaos and Horror. Even to speak of his army as soldiers is a misnomer, for they are trained to be sadists and killers. Most of his terror has been visited not on Museveni's army, but on his own Acholi people, in whose name he launched his so-called rebellion.

Besides the many hundreds of people that have been mutilated and murdered, more than 1.7 million have been turned into refugees within their own country (inwardly displaced persons or idps). They are afraid to return to their villages, afraid to farm their land, afraid to travel. Vast areas of northern Uganda that were once populated and farmed have been returning to wilderness. The people who once inhabited the villages have been confined to virtual concentration camps for their own protection. Here they are wholly dependent on handouts from foreign countries for subsistence. There are few jobs and few schools. Disease takes its toll, especially on the young.

Although the security situation has improved in recent months, especially in some areas, most of the people are still too fearful, too traumatized, to return home. Take Omona Richard, for example: the first time Omona, 35, fled his village to live in a camp for internally displaced people was in 1997 when the Lord's Resistance Army attacked Padide in the northern Ugandan district of Kitgum, killing his cousin.

"We went to the camp because of the security situation," he told a reporter for IRIN, the UN news agency. "I had one child at the time, now I have four – three of whom were born in the camps." Asked if he was willing to return home to Ywaya parish, Omona said, "No, it is still not safe." Instead, he chose to move from Padibe camp to Madi Kiloc 'satellite village' – a smaller settlement designated by the government as part of the strategy to decongest the much bigger camps.

Government officials now maintain that the war has virtually ended, and that displaced populations should return home. "The situation is much better," said Christine Aporu Akol, the Ugandan minister of state for disaster preparedness. "Overall, people are willing to go back home, but there are mixed feelings."

Driving to the satellite village of Madi Kiloc, 30 km north of Kitgum town, two trucks carrying soldiers accompanied an aid convoy, zooming at high speed past more soldiers on foot patrol. A few villagers had ventured out to their farms and were planting crops. "We cannot venture far away from the camps because the rebels are still there," Omona insisted.

However, the government feels differently. "The army has defeated the LRA terrorism in the north, and the peace prevailing now in southern Sudan has paved way for the return of the displaced persons to their homes," said President Yoweri Museveni in mid-March. Only 120 rebel fighters remain, and even they have fled from southern Sudan to Garamba National Park

See **Uganda** *on page 2 ...*

Darfur conflict spreading to Chad

Harry der Nederlanden

In Africa, many conflicts have tended to spread across borders, partly because the borders stamped on the continent by colonial powers often put people from the same tribe in different countries. Chad shares a long border with Sudan, the western border of Darfur province. A large segment of the population displaced from the villages of Darfur by the Janjawid raiders, responsible for over 200,000 deaths, are settled in camps across the border in Chad or very close to the Chad border. There are now close to one-quarter of a million refugees in eastern Chad.

That has not been easy for the Chadians. The people in this country are among the poorest in the world. They are not much better off than the refugees, and some have complained that the Darfurians are getting all the aid, while they are being ignored. In recent months, too, the Arab militias or Janjawid have been crossing the border to strike at the refugees and they have

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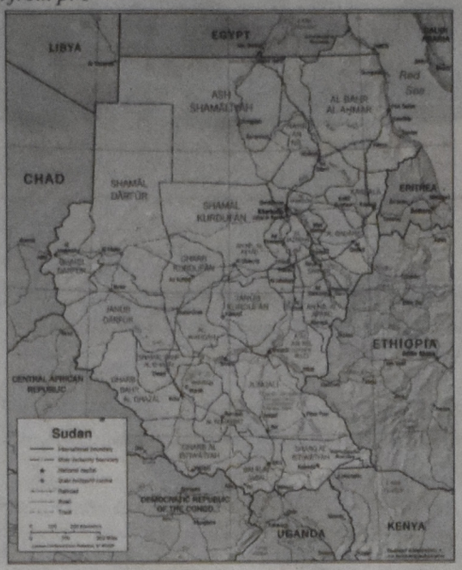
News

Conflict *continued from p. 1*

also destroyed villages in Chad, turning hundreds of Chadians, too, into "internally displaced persons."

In April, shortly before elections, Chad's President Idriss Deby denounced the international community for its failure to respond to escalating violence in Darfur and for ignoring what he alleges are incursions into his country by militias supported by Sudan.



UN's Kofi Annan warned of a domino effect that could plunge the entire area into chaos.

On April 13, a rebel force [see related story] made its way into Ndjamena, the capital city of Chad, spreading panic throughout the city. These were not, however, Janjawid from Sudan but Chadian rebels. There is a lot of deep dissatisfaction with Deby's dictatorial rule in the country. His government has been ranked as the most corrupt in the world.

Since its independence from France in 1960, the country has experienced a succession of repressive regimes, removed by rebellions, as well as continuous strife among ethnic groups and wars with all of its neighbors.

Deby himself came to power by leading a rebellion in 1990, promising the dawn of a new age.

But he has proved just as corrupt and repressive as previous rulers. The elections held May 3 were boycotted by many because they knew Deby's victory was a foregone conclusion. Many now fear the country will dissolve into civil war.

Do the Chadian rebels offer a better alternative? Contrary to boasts that they constitute a coherent, disciplined force with a clear plan of action, diplomats and aid workers say that much of the rebel activity amounts to little more than banditry and warlordism.

Experts in the geopolitics of the region are very worried: they warn that a civil war in Chad will make finding a workable peace in Darfur almost impossible. Providing aid to some 3 million refugees and displaced persons, already a difficult task, will be rendered infinitely more difficult and dangerous, for most aid has been channeled through Chad. The present peace talks being held in Nigeria have stalled repeatedly.

In late April the UN at last agreed to impose sanctions on Sudan, and it announced that due to shortages in funding it would have to cut rations to the refugee camps.

From Texas to Chad: why one rebel fights

Daniel Pepper

ALONG THE CHAD-SUDAN BORDER – For someone in a position of great responsibility, Chadian rebel officer Beshir Outman can be disarmingly self-deprecating.

"I know that in America 'Chad' is mostly a person's name," he says, before delving into the problems that drove him to leave a decent job managing logistics for Coca-Cola and join the rebellion that reached Chad's capital last month.

Mr. Outman, a tall, lean 24-year-old who studied English at a Houston community college, offers a rare behind-the-frontlines glimpse into Chad's rebel movement. His brothers and cousins still live comfortably in the suburbs of Houston, where they hold video game marathons and watch "Survivor." But Outman has left that life behind.

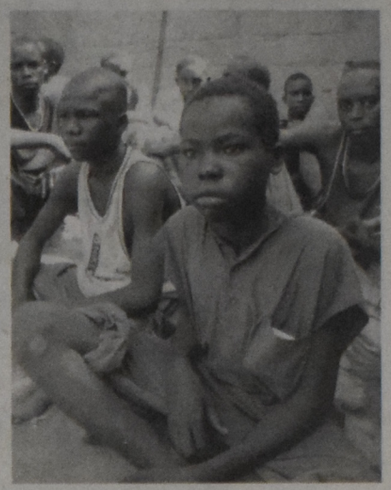
"Most Chadian leaders take care of themselves, their family and their clan," in that order, says Outman, who was interviewed last month near the Sudan-Chad border, before the April offensive began. As he spoke, preparations for the rebel attacks were under way; a boy of 12 or 13 was packing rounds into a machine gun clip nearby.

Outman is the First Commandant for Internal Security for the United Front for Democratic Change (FUCD), the main faction of well-armed Chadian rebels who last week fought their way more than 450 miles from their bases on the edge of the war-ravaged Darfur region of western Sudan through their native country towards N'djamena, Chad's capital city.

Just days before the country's presidential elections, which have been boycotted by all opposition parties, some of the rebels made it inside the capital, but were repelled by forces loyal to Mr. Deby. The rebels say they made a tactical retreat and have repeatedly vowed to oust Deby before presidential elections scheduled.

Only one faction of the rebel movement, the FUCD has 8,000 fighters, according to its leadership.

In early March, one of their forward military bases on the porous Chad-Sudan border had about 600 fighters, and many of FUCD's top leaders. The camp was filled with young men fishtailing through sandy riverbeds in new Toyota Land Cruisers, beige sacks of rocket-propelled grenades dangling from the sides. Kalashnikovs outnumbered shoes (younger conscripts had flip-flops), which made it easy to find Outman – the only rebel in a thousand miles sporting a pair of beat-up Nikes.



From student to rebel

Outman studied business administration for a year in Quebec City, and then English at a Houston community college for two semesters while living with his relatives. He left the US abruptly in October 2003, when his father, an investment banker-turned-politician from a leading Chadian opposition party, developed health problems.

Upon returning to Chad, Outman held a series of good jobs with large European companies and Coca-Cola doing shipping and logistics. He enjoyed the challenge of moving everything from cars to chewing gum across some of the most inhospitable landscapes on the planet.

But as time went on, life in N'Djamena frustrated him. Having tasted life in the US, he grew fed up with being robbed by the capital city's police, which he says is a common occurrence. Chad consistently ranks near the top of Transparency International's list of the world's most corrupt nations, and Outman holds President Deby's government responsible for fostering that widespread corruption.

Gradually, he became convinced the country needed new leadership. Given how Deby last spring pushed through a change to the Constitution that allows him to run for a third term, Outman felt the only way to bring that change was through force. Still, it was no single event that drove him to join the rebels, he says.

Sudan's role

Sudan has been the silent backer of Chad's rebels, until recently allowing them to train and launch their attacks from areas of Darfur, in western Sudan. Darfur is infamous for the three-year-old conflict involving the Sudanese government's brutal response to a tribal uprising, in which tens of thousands have been killed and around 1.8 million are now displaced, with at least 200,000 living as refugees in Chad.

Outman says it's all a tribal conflict, dismissing its political import and downplaying the humanitarian crisis. But looking at the FUCD rebels, it is hard to dismiss

Uganda ... *continued from p.1*

in the Democratic Republic of Congo, he insisted.

On April 12, the Ugandan army announced it would no longer provide military escorts to convoys delivering non-food aid to the war-ravaged region. "There is no longer need to give escorts to whoever travels on the roads. We are moving from a bad situation to an improved security situation," said army spokesman Lt Chris Magezi. "The situation is much better, as most major roads are now motorable without any threat of ambushes."

Aid workers, however, have called the measure premature. Omona agreed that security was still precarious. "They are lying," he said. "They do not understand Joseph Kony that well."

Others in the camps, too, point to the fact that there have been such lulls before, only to see Kony's marauders suddenly attack a village once again to massacre the adults and abduct the children.

Kony practices a mixture of Christianity, Islam and witchcraft, making his followers (and many others) believe that he has supernatural powers. And he has instilled such savagery in his followers that government soldiers also fear him.

After abducting children, Kony systematically brutalizes them, forcing them to kill fellow captives who are lagging, sometimes even members of their own family. The children are forced to witness torture and mutilation of children like themselves, including amputation of limbs, lips and ears. Both males and females are raped, and others are beaten or burnt to death for no reason. Traumatized, terrorized, bestialized and beaten, they are turned into demented killers who kill because they fear that if they don't, what they do to others will be done to them.

Museveni wants credit for normalizing his country, and has been pressuring those in the north to leave the camps and to go home, but in the heart of Kony country people do not trust the word of their government. The UN humanitarian coordinator in Uganda, Martin Mogwanja, told IRIN that, although in some districts people have started going home, in the Kitgum area people refuse "because they are still experiencing the kind of attacks, banditry and abductions as before."

In some villages, families have moved back, but they are afraid to keep their children with them overnight. So every evening large groups of children converge on camps and towns deemed safe to find a place to sleep for the night. Some have to walk miles every evening.

Part of this article has been excerpted from an IRIN news report.

Politics

Chad ... *continued*

their own tribalism; their rank and file largely draws upon one tribe, the Tama, in opposition to another, the Zaghawa. The FUCD rebels cite the corruption and nepotism of Deby, a Zaghawa, as a source of their ire.

Outman has never seen any of the Sudanese refugee camps in Chad or the displaced persons camps in Sudan. But, to him, the protests on US campuses and letter-writing campaigns to Congress are distracting the world from the more pressing issue in central Africa: the need for revolution in Chad.

At Outman's camp in April, the sense of nervous anticipation for the coming coup attempt was a constant. Morning military exercises began at dawn, followed by long stretches of doing nothing, which meant anything from napping to cleaning one's gun to chatting with friends.

Outman took the military buildup in stride. Boxes of portable air compressors, grenades, artillery rounds, truckloads of spare tires, and all sorts of machinery sat in different piles around the camp.

This reporter came to learn over time with the rebels and meetings with Sudanese intelligence officials that FUCD's plans are partly, if not largely, dictated by powers in Sudan's capital, Khartoum.

'Power comes from the East'

But if Sudan is now supporting the Chadian rebels against Deby's regime, many consider it payback for the Chadian leader's years of support for Sudan's own anti-government rebels, such as the Sudan Liberation Army (both Deby and leaders from the SLA hail from the same Zaghawa tribe). It's all a of bit tit-for-tat on each side of the border, and it seems that these days Sudan and their alleged proxy army – the Chadian rebels – have the upper hand.

"Darfur is like a forest full of cowboys. It's just the justice of the gun out here," Outman says. But it is not just any forest. "Power comes from the East" is a common saying in Chad. It is also a fact. In modern Chad's history every president has either been installed by or forced out of office by rebellions based in Darfur, on Chad's eastern edge. Deby himself launched his 1990 rebellion from Darfur.

Going to the 'Dark Side'

The kindest thing Outman can muster up about Chad's president is a Star Wars analogy: "When Deby was a kid he wanted to do the right thing, to help people. But when he got power he went to the Dark Side."

When asked how they plan to avoid the trap of the Dark Side – the corruption of power that so many other idealistic African revolutionaries have fallen prey to – the responses of the rebel leadership were familiar: We're different, we're fighting for justice and democracy.

The FUCD's top leader, 35-year-old Mohammad Nour, envisions the coup will be followed by an Afghan-style loya jirga forum, including traditional leaders from across Chad, to determine the nature of a transitional government, which in turn will develop a timetable for holding democratic elections.

The difference between Mr. Nour and Outman, besides the 10-year age gap and the fact that Outman is educated and has not spent his life in the military, is that Outman has seen what happens in a place like America, where lofty ideals and the democratic experiment are allowed to flourish.

"It's difficult," Outman says while taking a midday break in the shade of a mango tree (at the time of the interview these rebels' immediate concern was not getting hit by hard, green, mango projectiles chucked by monkeys living above).

"But if you think what we can do if we get to the capital ...," he says, listing the ways life in N'djamena would improve, including big highways and Wal-Mart-style shopping centers. "Even if it means eating once a day or whatever – it's the price we have to pay," he says.

Daniel Pepper is a contributor to The Christian Science Monitor

Principalities & Powers
David T. Koyzis

Christian Peacemakers' flawed witness

"Two months ago three of four hostages were successfully freed by soldiers of the coalition forces in Iraq after having been kidnapped at the end of November. The initial capture and subsequent rescue brought into the limelight the Toronto-based Christian Peacemakers Teams (CPT), an organization begun 20 years ago by Mennonites, Brethren and Quakers, all of whom are members of historic peace churches. According to its website, CPT is "committed to reducing violence by 'getting in the way'." What exactly does this entail?

CPT sponsors activities throughout the world, especially in those areas currently experiencing conflict. In the Israeli-occupied Palestinian territories, for example, CPT workers "stand with Palestinians and Israeli peace groups engaged in nonviolent opposition to Israeli military occupation, collective punishment, settler harassment, home demolitions and land confiscation." In Iraq CPT members work to "expose abusive acts by U.S. Armed Forces and support Iraqis committed to nonviolent resistance."

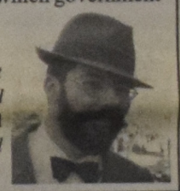
In this country CPT activists focus their efforts on defending aboriginal communities in northern Ontario, British Columbia, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. In the US, along the Arizona border with Mexico, CPT staff are undertaking to "challenge US immigration policies that result in hundreds of migrant deaths," to "remain alert to vigilante threats and monitor border patrol officers' treatment of migrants."

While there is certainly legitimacy in such activities, the difficulty in CPT's approach lies more in what it neglects than in what it emphasizes. In this respect there is a certain one-sidedness in their activities, which suggests that their understanding of public justice is incomplete at best and flawed at worst. Take Iraq as an example.

There is reason to dispute President Bush's foreign and defence policies, which appear to manifest a dangerous overestimation of American military capabilities and to lack a sense of the limits of power. I have personally come to believe that going into Iraq was not a wise thing to do for reasons given before in this space. Yet it is difficult to escape the impression that CPT is ignoring the obvious terror being perpetrated by insurgents. Whatever the flaws in the American/British/Australian occupation, there is at least a concerted effort to set up a functioning constitutional system. This the insurgents are not even attempting to do; they are simply sowing discord. If CPT is unable to tell the difference between the coalition and the insurgents in this respect, then one might fairly question the adequacy of their working definition of justice.

Similarly, in the Israeli-occupied territories, would it not be better for CPT, rather than taking a one-sided obstructionist position, to propose avenues whereby Palestinians and Israelis could come to co-operate – possibly in a single state, but more likely in two separate states – such that neither side would feel so vulnerable as to inflict obvious atrocities on the other?

Finally, one looks in vain for CPT to find a positive role for government. When governments act, CPT generally perceives them to be part of the problem rather than a potential part of the solution. Along with this appears to come a flawed view of justice as one-sided advocacy rather than as something requiring a careful weighing in the balance of legitimate, albeit clashing interests. If they could come to recognize the complexities involved in doing justice in the real world, as well as the crucial difference between the judicial exercise of force and the mere perpetration of violence, CPT members might be able to affirm a more constructive approach in which government plays a necessary and God-given role.



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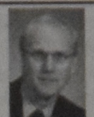

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Editorial

On walking around in circles

Harry der Nederlanden

Writing editorials is not easy. In fact, I've found it so difficult that, I admit, what appears on this page is seldom an editorial – at least my pieces don't look very much like what appears on the editorial pages of most newspapers and magazines. Granted, we do put "Editorial" on top of the page, but that is only to fool the unwary.

Every now and again I am informed by some irate English teacher (twice by principals!) that editorials should be about half as long, that they shouldn't meander all over the place, and that they should take a position and come to the point more quickly. I never disagree with such brethren (yes, they've all been brethren) because they know whereof they speak. I humbly agree and promise to do penance for my sins against the rules of editorializing.

My act of penance is to go for a long walk – a peregrination for penance. Now, I can already hear the objections to my theology from some of you disciplinarians. You know that I get great enjoyment from walking, so you object that it isn't kosher (sorry for mixing religions) to select walking as an act of penance.

It's true: part of the Catholic theology of penance is that you must do something you'd prefer not to do. But I'm not Catholic. So I have reformed the theology of penance, and now I can do something enjoyable with a clear conscience.

That may strike some of you as unCalvinistic because it seems self-indulgent. But I appeal to Bert Witvoet's column for support. My way of doing penance celebrates the first "Yes!" – the one that affirms the created goodness of the body. My body likes to walk hither and yon over the face of the earth – no, not like Satan – like Adam. I know that Genesis literally says that God brought all the animals to Adam so that he could name them, but I'm no literalist. I think that Adam roamed all over Eden like a rancher counting and branding his livestock. He loved to move around and observe the animals in their several habitats. I'm almost certain that Adam didn't just park his butt on his front porch waiting for the animals to parade by in single file. What about the rainbow trout, for example – he wouldn't have expected them to pay him a visit. Adam would have hiked over to the Tigris or the Euphrates River, found a good spot along the bank to stretch out on his belly and observe the fish thrashing in the clear stream.

Those Adamic impulses are mine too. I like to walk awhile, and when I find an inviting spot, I like to stop awhile, gaze awhile and let my mind do the meandering. Rivers and streams are great places to stop, because they also meander and they are garrulous, or perhaps querulous, with memories and ideas. They practice an art of conversation that invites you to let your thoughts flow and eddy and splash even as their voices continue their never-ending murmur. Your thoughts can ride along on their thoughts, just like the bark fragments carried off by the current. Who knows where the current will carry you?

I can't say for sure, but I think that the battle between the sexes may have begun right here. Whenever my wife Rose and I go out for Sunday walks together, there is conflict. As we're striding purposefully along the trail, my eye is suddenly caught by the sun glinting off a little waterfall or sometimes even off a mere ripple, and my mind meanders off and my feet forget to move. A few moments later, coming back to my senses, I realize Rose is nowhere to be seen, and I have to go running down the trail, whistling and calling for my lost helpmeet. By the time we get home, I'm worn to a frazzle because I've had to cover twice as much territory, sprinting and leaping over rocks and chasms in anxiety for my weaker half.

She's afraid of heights, and you never know when she might find herself trapped on one, frozen and quivering in fear. That happened a couple of weeks ago when we took our two grandchildren for a hike in Short Hills. When the main trail reached the main creek, it was still engorged by recent rains, so we couldn't cross. However, on an earlier visit during Spring thaw, I'd discovered a spot quite a ways downstream, where two trees had toppled across the creek, forming a perfect bridge. You did have to struggle your way through a dense tangle of thorns and briars, so it was no walk in Paradise.

After I had tippled across – Rose would say "shuffled" rather than tippled – and the grandchildren had skipped across, it was Rose's turn. Gathering all her courage, like a hen gathers its chicks under its quivering wings, she carefully edged her way to the middle of the natural bridge, where a branch jutted upward. There she froze, clinging to the little branch with both hands like a wounded World War II ace clinging to the joystick of his Spitfire as it hurtles earthward.

"Come, Grandma, come!" Jake and Chelsea cried, urging her on.

Meanwhile, I manoeuvered to a sharp bend upstream and whipped out my camera, in case she plunged from her perch into the icy stream. After all, I am a journalist and it is my duty to record such moments for posterity. Alas, it was not to be. Sinking to her knees on the log, she crawled along on her hands and knees for a few feet till she was helped up by her all-too-eager grandchildren.

At last she stood safely on the other bank. Was she happy? Did she rejoice at having overcome her fear? No, she transfixed me with an icy stare that would have turned Hydra herself to stone.

"Wasn't that a great adventure?" I ventured. "You really don't know how it will turn out until you've done it."

I was trying to point out that the element of risk and uncertainty, the experience of hanging over a void, belonged to the most fundamental levels of human existence. But she isn't philosophically inclined, especially not when she's teetering on a log across a stream. Later, I overheard her on the phone with our oldest daughter telling her that the logs were suspended eight feet above a raging stream. Granted, perspective is everything, but a yardstick planted on the creek bottom would have jutted up well above the level of the log bridge.

I held up my camera. "I got some nice shots," I said hopefully – hopeful that she'd interpret it to mean that I had recorded her moment of heroism for all to marvel at. But she's an Iowa Calvinist, and she sees through such stratagems into the evil depths of the human heart in the twinkling of an eye.

"You were hoping I'd fall in!" she snarled.

At that moment she looked like the Accuser herself. (Who says Satan has to be masculine?)

Now, where was I before I began telling you about our encounter with the raging stream and raging Rose? Anecdotes and illustrations have a way of running away with a closely reasoned argument. Have you ever noticed that? How often, after hearing a doctrinal sermon, don't you come home and all you recall is one of the stories that the pastor told, but you don't remember the point of it!

That's not so bad. Life is a journey, a meandering walk. The Bible talks more about a way than about a stay. Though we must stay on the way.

That's why my editorials are so long and meandering. I'm usually not at all sure that I know my destination and how I'm going to get there. So it's a little bit like going out for a walk together, pausing here and there, trying out this trail and that, stopping to snap a few pictures. Although we're walking together, you and I, companions on the same route, I'm not convinced that I should be trying to compel you to see the same things in the same way that I do. But that doesn't mean we can't explore our shared world together and point out some things to each other.

After I led Rose to the foot of the waterfall tumbling over green rocks, and after I pointed out some trillium (trillia?) with dark red petals, she let go her thoughts of vengeance and began to relax. On the way back, we went exploring and found a winding trail that enabled us to get back without having to cross the chasm of terror. That made her so happy that when we got home she made us some apple crisp.

Lee Harris (the fellow who inspired John Bolt's deep thoughts) distinguishes between "opinionating" and "thinking." The Opinionater – the author of most editorials – knows from the outset exactly where he wants to take you, and he marshals all his logic and rhetoric to take you to that selfsame spot in the shortest possible distance.

I confess, I'm not good at that sort of thing. On our walks together, I have a hard time keeping up with Rose. I'm constantly having to sprint to catch up.

But think of the Israelites entering the Promised Land. They knew they had to defeat the people of Jericho. But had they launched a direct attack on the city of Jericho, they would have splattered themselves all over those massive stone walls. They followed a more divine logic – they just walked round and round in circles blowing their tooters till the walls came crashing down.

So as you read my "editorials" and you find yourself thinking that I'm just blowing my tooter, be patient, walk along a while. Who knows what walls will come crashing down?

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Will CRC encourage pastoral ministry with same-gender couples?

Gerald Vandezande

The Christian Reformed Church, Classis Toronto and First Toronto CRC clearly are at a critical cross-road. Especially now when we engage in open-hearted dialogue regarding our pastoral history and ministry with committed, same-gender couples who belong to CRC churches and worship with us.

Which direction will we choose? Which road will we travel? Which way will we follow? Will we, together, in community, in faith, hope, and love seek to follow Jesus, the Way, the Truth, and the Life?

Will we, by the grace and power of God, communally confess and publicly express a Spirit-filled, hope-giving, life-affirming, peaceful way of life? Will we, wounded people, communally become a greater healing, transforming presence in our wounded world?

Will we purposely journey together? Will we, by the enlightening and empowering love and wisdom of Jesus' life-embracing and culture-renewing Spirit, increasingly become a positive presence where we live, work and meet our neighbors?

The CRC's Synod (consisting of fallible males) and the denomination's study committees, as well as Classis Toronto's Advisory Committee, formulate and often speak of "guidelines." They, at best, should advise and guide office bearers and members. We all are called to exercise our God-given "office", our diverse creaturely gifts and responsibilities in the freedom with which Christ has set us free for service (Galatians 5).

Denominational, classical and congregational guidelines should be rooted in and flow from the grace, love and peace of Jesus, the Lord, Guide, Reconciler, Savior of Life, the Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer of life. The Creation, Incarnation, Crucifixion, Resurrection and Pentecost are "normative."

A few questions

What is our current understanding of the liberating message and creation-wide ministry of reconciliation? What is our view of life-embracing redemption, renewal, restoration and reformation as we live, witness (are living evidence), in our largely secularized culture and deeply divided world? What do we, should we, proclaim and practice, consistently reflecting the good news of Jesus' unconditional love and forgiveness, acceptance and inclusion?

In light of a coherent biblical life-perspective, what is our actual understanding of discipleship, fellowship, worship, stewardship, and citizenship as we seek to be living letters of Christ in the 21st century? ("A letter from Christ…written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God" 2 Corinthians 3:23)

A few concerns and comments

The Classis Toronto Advisory Committee rightly recognizes "the need to clarify the 'weight accredited denominationally to the word guidelines.'" The Committee refers to Synod's 1973, 1996 and 1999 decisions. (These decisions speak of "pastoral advice," "pastoral recommendations," and "keeping the discussion in our churches within the pastoral guidelines adopted by Synod 1973.") The Synodical Committee of 2002 also speaks of "guidelines" as well as the "specific pastoral guidelines of the 1973 report." (Note the words: "*pastoral* advice, *pastoral* recommendations and specific *pastoral* guidelines." – emphasis added.)

Then, the Advisory Committee (2005 – 30 years later!) quotes Synod 1975, ART. 46 B2b: "Synodical pronouncements on doctrinal and ethical matters are subordinate to the confession and they 'shall be considered settled and binding' unless it is proved that they conflict with the Word of God or the Church Order (C.O. ART. 29). All office bearers and members are expected to abide by these Synodical deliverances."

The Advisory Committee (2005) then states: "We assert, therefore, that the denomination deems these synodical statements to mean that 'guidelines' are 'normative.'"

I trust we agree that "the Word of God" and "the Church Order" are not equally important. Fundamentally and ultimately, only Jesus and the Gospel are "normative." This jump from "pastoral advice," "recommendations" and "guidelines" to equating synodical advice with being "normative" is elevating "guidelines" to "doctrinal and ethical declarations." What are the biblical roots and rationale?

These charged statements by Synod and the Advisory Committee (2005) raise fundamental concerns and key questions. They deserve careful reflection and thoughtful dialogue!

A few more questions

Who do we, Christian Reformed people, understand Jesus Christ to be and mean, in this context, as the Way, the Truth and the Life (indeed, the LORD is the Source, the Guide, and the Goal of all that is (Romans 11:36–NEB), as this scriptural confession relates to both heterosexuality and homosexuality?

What do we understand God's Word to mean for responsible living and for faithful relationships? Do we realize that none of us and none of our congregations is without sin and that all of us and all of our institutions "have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23), including our denomination and other institutions?

What do and should our communal confessions "Jesus is Lord!" and "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength and Love your neighbor as yourself" (Mark 12:30, 31) actually mean for:

a) Our personal and communal lives as Christ-believers, and as;
b) CRC members and office bearers, and as;
c) Covenant keepers with our ever-faithful and forgiving God, and as;
d) Keepers of "the denominational covenant with the CRC," and as the CRC and its assemblies and congregations are called

Continued on page 6...

There is more to be learned from the pacifists

Some comments about Bolt and Antonides' views on the CRC on war and peace (*CC* April 17, 2006).

Mennonites in the sixteenth century based their rejection of war on two related aspects. They took their ethics from a literal reading of the Sermon on the Mount and combined this with the notion that war was an activity of the world and everything of the world was condemned. In general, Christian pacifists have taken the Sermon on the Mount in a similarly literal way. Bolt and Antonides essentially reject this literalism and this starting point.

While I personally would not start with this sermon, I find it interesting that so many CRC members take so much in Scripture literally, but find ways to circumvent the literal application of this powerful message.

So, where do we start? Bolt and Antonides appeal to the tradition of Calvin and Augustine. Pacifism, they argue, is not part of the Reformed tradition. That's true, but hardly convincing. As *The Fiddler on the Roof* makes clear, appeals to tradition is a problematic business. Calvin, and even more so Beza, followed the Catholic tradition going back to the Augustinian era. That's a venerable tradition, but pacifists could appeal to an even older tradition.

There are enough indications that the early church was initially pacifist. Historians don't agree why the early church was pacifist, but they can't deny that it was so. The CRC report does not come to grips with this early tradition, a serious weakness in the report. Bolt and Antonides are not helpful here either.

As far as Augustine is concerned, he was not the first one to propose a just war notion, but his ideas greatly influenced the western church. Unfortunately, his exegesis on this issue was highly questionable, and again the report does not bother with this flaw. Augustine realized that the position of the church of his time differed significantly from that of the early church. But instead of adjusting the idea of the state to the church, he adjusted the church to the state. Catholics and much of Protestantism has followed suit. In the process the church lost much of its prophetic voice.

Appeals to the Reformed tradition, to Augustine, or even to the early church are in themselves not very useful if there is no sound and solid biblical foundation. From Bolt, a systematic theologian, I could have expected a powerful discussion on the nature of the church and the kingdom of God, which, as far as I am concerned, should be starting point of any discussion for Christians. Instead, he and Antonides take the state as their starting point, although they don't seem to realize it.

Both also should read Oxford scholar Martin Ceadel's work. Author of several important books on British pacifism, he himself is not a pacifist. He has also argued that the just war cannot be regarded as a theory about war. Bolt, Antonides and the CRC report are either ignorant of his arguments or can't be bothered to deal with them; hardly a satisfactory situation.

Bert den Boggende

(For a more detailed exposition of the pacifist tradition see Mr. Den Boggende's essay on our website)

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Opinion

All his enemies and mine (V)

"When we make God our enemy"

John Bolt
Calvin Theological Seminary

After spending all this time in four articles discussing our contemporary earthly enemy in the war against terrorism, it is time to look at an even bigger problem, our enmity with Almighty God. A closer look at that enmity will also help us understand better how to deal with our earthly enemy. For, as we noted in the previous article about our twofold enemy – the devil and his earthly, human minions – realizing that our enemies are spiritual powers is both terrifying and comforting, and for much the same reason. We are to be involved in the battle against our enemy, but *ultimately* it's out of our hands and in the hands of God and his angels. Now we will see the same challenge and comfort in the fact that we have made God our enemy.

This enmity with God is of course a very complicated busi-ness. Consider what we said about having to acknowledge that we have an enemy even when we don't want an enemy. When someone declares himself to be our enemy, he starts to define us; his hatred of us requires that we acknowledge him as our enemy, even if we desperately want to be his friend. That changes things; we are no longer in control of our own world. Our enemy makes us define ourselves on his terms. Now, here's the interesting question: who determined that we become God's enemies, God or we? Did we make God our enemy or did God decide that we were his enemies?

This is complex and I suspect that most of us have never really thought much about it. We know that Paul in Romans 5:10 tells us that "while we were enemies" God reconciled us to himself through Christ's death, but how did we become enemies? If we did it, did God then have no choice? He wants to love us but we say "no"? That sure sounds like it gives us more power over God than is fitting. On the other hand, if God declares us as enemies and we don't want to be, doesn't that make God arbitrary, despotic, or even heartless? Who is to blame for the enmity?

The Reformed confessional and theological tradition handles that problem by insisting that *we* became God's enemies by *our* sinful rebellion *but* also that this did not happen accidentally, outside the scope of God's plan and purpose. This almost paradoxical combination is stated wonderfully by the Apostle Peter in his Pentecost sermon when he says this about the death of our Lord: "This man was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to a cross" (Acts 2:23),

The cross gives us an even more important clue. Let's go back to Genesis 3:15 where God himself establishes an enmity. What is remarkable is that this is *not* an enmity between the human parent pair and God – and then, secondarily, between us and God – but between the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman. In other words, read in the light of the biblical story of salvation as a whole, God takes our human side and *with us* becomes the Devil's enemy. God's enmity is not against us as his creatures but against evil, against sin. It is only in this light that we can understand the Psalmist identifying God's enemies with his (Psalm 139:19-22). Recall the words of the Catechism: "All his enemies *and mine.*" (Acknowledgement: For the inspiration to pursue this point about being God's enemy I was inspired by the same person who preached the Lord's Day 19 sermon that triggered this series, Rev. Chris Schoon, who doubles as one of my pastors at Plymouth Heights CRC in Grand Rapids, Michigan, and a former and present student at Calvin Theological Seminary).

The Four Avenging Angels *by Albrecht Durer*

This is truly amazing and wonderful. While we are boxed in by our enemies – we are powerless to turn them into friends if they declare themselves our enemy – God is restricted by no such box. We turn in rebellion against God and in so doing, we in effect make him our enemy. But God chooses in freedom and in grace not to accept the terms of this enmity; he declares enmity against the very notion of enmity itself; he becomes the enemy of the archenemy. The one who is our Accuser, the Satan, the Enemy, doesn't get the final word; doesn't get to decide the rules of engagement. God, and only God, can break the cycle of enmity, hatred, violence, and destruction that characterizes the warring world in which we live and die; all too often die. And God does it by taking on himself, in the death of Christ, his own judgment and enmity against sin and evil. On the cross the Son of God accepts the enmity of the Father in our place: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

It is important for us never to forget that only God can do this; we can't. This is a major problem with ecclesiastical pacifism, with those numerous statements about shalom and peace that stream forth from Geneva, Toronto, New York and other places where ecumenical bureaucrats dream their shalomological dreams. God can, by taking our enmity on himself in Christ, turn our enmity around. "While we were sinners, while we were enemies, Christ died for us." But *we* can't do that and to think that pacifist sentiment – let's beat ourselves up with self-loathing and self-criticism about how evil we are while befriending them and feeling their pain, and, voila, they will become our friends – is to delude ourselves into thinking we are God. It is to think that our self-inflicted suffering parallels the wrath of God poured out on Christ. It is idolatry and while we must be on guard against the idolatry of national self-aggrandizement and militarism, the idolatry of utopian pacifism is no less a false god that will destroy us.

No, the only way we can turn our Islamofascist terrorist enemies into our friends is to have God change their hearts. And in that mission he does ask our help; not by joining more international peace groups, but by bringing the good news of the gospel. If the CRC is to be a genuine contributor to peace in our world it will need to double and redouble its efforts to raise up from among us a generation of missionaries to the Muslims, here in North America and abroad. The question we face is whether we really believe that God can overcome enmity and turn it into friendship. Do we really believe that the gospel actually broke down the "dividing wall of hostility (enmity)" that the Apostle Paul speaks of in Ephesians 2? Remember how Paul begins Ephesians 2:14: "For he [Christ] is our peace." To the degree we believe that or not we believe the gospel itself. To look elsewhere for peace is to give stones for bread, dust for water.

Pastoral Ministry ... *continued from page 5*

to keep 'the denominational covenant' with all who confess the Name?

Who and what does Jesus call and invite us to be and do, alone and together, at this critical juncture in human history?

How can we all, in community, most meaningfully serve God's gentle reign of compassion, love, faithfulness, mercy, justice and peace (see Matthew 23:23 and Luke 11:42)?

A few conclusions

When I engage MPs in discussions on human rights, I express, among other beliefs, such as equity, freedom, justice and mutual respect, my deep conviction that:

a) God loves all people, that;
b) Churches should welcome all people, and that;
c) Governments should protect all people.

What do you believe and advocate?

In view of all of the foregoing, wouldn't it be pastoral and unifying to warmly encourage the Council of First CRC to continue its vital ministry within and beyond the CRC, in the service of Jesus and all our neighbors?

Jesus invites us to engage in servant leadership, not in the use of majoritarian power. Therefore, neither Classis Toronto nor the CRC Synod should take any actions that would hinder First Toronto's Christ-like, pastoral ministry. If anything, all concerned should humbly walk and work together in faith, hope and love – for the coming of God's inclusive justice and mercy everywhere.

I sincerely hope and pray that First Toronto, Classis Toronto and the denomination will develop biblically-faithful ways of moving forward together!

Marriage as a public good

(Zenit.org) – Marriage's role as a public institution is increasingly under attack. In the midst of pressures for legalization of same-sex marriage, formal recognition of de facto couples, and the continuing problem of divorce, the traditional view of marriage is no longer clear to many people.

But a volume of recently published essays collects an impressive array of evidence by leading scholars defending marriage and arguing that it serves the common good. *The Meaning of Marriage: Family, State, Market, and Morals* (Spence Publishing) is edited by Robert P. George and Jean Bethke Elshtain, professors at Princeton University and the University of Chicago, respectively.

Elshtain notes in the book's foreword that nobody is left untouched by the marriage debate, because it is such a pervasive institution in society. Discourse over the future of marriage, however, has become increasingly fractious as groups such as same-sex couples demand recognition of their "rights."

An underlying theme in the book, she continues, is the conviction that altering the institution of marriage will have profound and perhaps unintended consequences for ourselves as individuals, and for society in general.

In all observed societies some form of marriage exists, comments English philosopher Roger Scruton in his chapter. Not only does it play a vital role in handing on the work of one generation to the next, but it also protects and nurtures children, is a form of social and economic cooperation, and regulates sexual activity.

Long-linked to religion, the marriage tie in recent times has faced a steady de-sacralization in the West. As well, social constraints tying husband and wife have diminished to the point where marriage has left behind the Christian undertaking of "till death do us part," and now resembles more a short-term contract.

Indeed, this loss of the religious aspect of marriage played a key role its weakening, Scruton argues. A sacred vow is a far more binding commitment than a civil promise. And little by little, the state has loosened the marital tie, to the point where, he contends, we now approach "serial polygamy." But these rescindable civil unions cannot carry out the traditional functions. In fact, they serve principally to "amplify the self-confidence of the partners," he maintains, and cannot guarantee security to the children.

What about the children?

The next essay in the book examines, in fact, the fate of children. In their joint contribution, Don Browning, professor emeritus at the University of Chicago Divinity School, and Elizabeth Marquardt, author of a recent book on the effects of divorce on children, look at the effects of same-sex marriage on children.

They take issue with same-sex marriage advocates, and also the position taken by the Supreme Court of Massachusetts when it legalized same-sex unions. Making sexual exchange and affection the center of the institution of marriage, while ignoring its generative goals, is an error, they maintain.

And redefining marriage in this way dispenses with the principle that the individuals who give life to children should be the ones who raise them in an enduring relationship. Children have a right to parents and families, as even the United Nations in its Convention on the Rights of the Child affirms. They also have a right to be raised in a society where the legal and cultural institutions help ensure they will be raised by the parents who conceived them, argue Browning and Marquardt.

Ample evidence shows that children raised by their married biological parents do better, on average, than those raised by single parents or step-parents. There is little research so far on the fate of children raised by same-sex couples. But up to now, experience with alternative family forms suggests that these unions will not be able to duplicate the personal investments made by married heterosexual couples in their marriages, and the resulting solidity and positive effects, the authors assert.

"To disregard the needs of children, the traditions that have understood these needs, and contemporary social science evidence offends natural justice," they observe.

Healthier

A more detailed look at how marriage protects children is the subject of Maggie Gallagher's contribution. Gallagher, author of a number of books on the subject, notes that marriage:

– increases the likelihood that children enjoy warm, close relationships with their parents;

– reduces child poverty; and

– leads to healthier children, who are also more likely to do well at school and graduate from college.

By contrast, children raised outside of intact married homes are more likely to divorce, have higher rates of substance abuse and mental illness, and suffer abuse as youngsters.

Gallagher acknowledges that scholars are still debating over the size of the marital advantage, and the mechanisms by which it is conferred. But there is no doubt that marriage is much more than just a private arrangement based on emotions. It is also a social good with profound influences on children.

Some advocates of same-sex marriage, she notes, argue that there is evidence demonstrating that children brought up in these unions do not suffer any disadvantages compared to children raised by heterosexual couples. But Gallagher points to studies that have demonstrated methodological failures in the research advanced by same-sex advocates as proof for their cause.

Among the problems are small sample sizes, a lack of long-term studies, and the fact that the vast majority of the studies compared single lesbian mothers to single heterosexual mothers, and not to married couples.

Economic role

In his essay, Harold James, professor of

See **Marriage** *on p. 8 ...*

Talents 2: Development

Reflections on Stewardship

Rick De Graaf

Last issue, we focused on the benefits of identifying the talents – skills, abilities, aptitudes, and spiritual gifts – that God has uniquely given to you. These talents are given deliberately by God for a purpose, not just for our own benefit. We really 'get it' when we realize that God has his purposes in mind. In fact, he will challenge us with even more talents if we are faithful in using them for his purposes. We 'get' that from the parable of the talents (Matt. 25).

As Christian stewards, we have the responsibility for and the privilege of developing the talents God has given us. Developing and working within the framework of the talents that we have been given will give us the greatest contentment in our lives as we serve God and neighbor.

The apostle Peter says it so clearly:

Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen. 1Peter 4:10, 11

How can we develop our talents? Here's a suggested list of things you can do:

1. Maximize the opportunity to practice and stretch your talents, especially voluntary opportunities. Make yourself available to be asked and offer to help.
2. Take courses – full-time or part-time, correspon-dence or night classes.
3. Join a club/group to meet others who have similar talents to challenge and encourage each other to grow.
4. Consider a mentor relationship, especially in your dominant talent area.
5. Read books and periodicals in your skill area. Keep yourself sharp and up-to-date.
6. Get feedback from others, listening especially to what friends and colleagues are saying. Have a humble attitude: "I can always improve." And don't let pride get in the way to sideline you. (Romans 12: 3)
7. Commit your talents to God: let him bless and enable you.

It is my hope and prayer that God may enable you to use all the gifts (talents) that he has entrusted to you; that he may say of your stewardship: "Well done, good and faithful servant (steward)! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!" (Matt. 25:23)

Interesting isn't it? God is happy when we are using our gifts!

Stewardly tip: A Personal Covenant. Jot down all the talents that you have been given, even the lesser ones. Take that list and covenant them back to God; after all, these talents have been entrusted to you by him. He made you in his image. Covenanting them back to God helps you to acknowledge your talents and to use them (not to bury them in the ground like in the parable of the talents). Periodically review what you've written (see a personal review last issue) and observe how God works within you!

Readers: Share your 'Stewardly Tips' so that we all can make better use of the resources God has entrusted to us. Submit your suggestion and your contact information so that we can acknowledge your contribution or ask for more details.

Next issue: Big Picture Stewardship 1

Rick DeGraaf works for Christian Stewardship Services in Markham, Ontario Rick's email: rickd@csservices.ca

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Pentecostalism at 100: a major religious force

Jane Lampman

As the 1906 earthquake shook San Francisco, another quake of sorts was occurring in southern California – tremors that reconfigured the Christian world.

During the last week of April, tens of thousands of Pentecostals and Charismatics from around the globe gathered in Los Angeles to celebrate the centennial of the Azusa Street Revival, an "outpouring of the Holy Spirit" that begat the modern Pentecostal movement.

Over the past century, that movement has sparked a fresh focus on New Testament "gifts of the Spirit" in many denominations. Its influence now embraces one-quarter of all Christians – more than 500 million of them.

"To everyone's surprise, Pentecostalism has grown at a rate no one predicted 50 years ago," says David Daniels, professor at McCormick Theological Seminary in Chicago.

Today, a reverse missionary movement has begun – to bring revival to the West. The largest thriving churches in secular Europe, for instance, are pastored by Africans.

"We've not given up on Europe and North America," says the Rev. Roberto Miranda, senior pastor at Lion of Judah Congregation in Boston. "The legacy of Azusa is very much alive, and many believe that a huge revival is imminent."

Looking to the future at the Los Angeles meeting, Pentecostals heard from US pastors like T.D. Jakes and leaders from Latin America, Africa, and Asia, home to the world's largest church. South Korea's Yoido Full Gospel Church, begun in a tent in a Seoul slum in 1958, boasts more than 700,000 members.

Each of the five evenings was hosted by pastors from a different continent. During the day, celebrants participated in sessions on such topics as "The Holy Spirit and Healing," "Prayer Movements and Pentecostal Power," and "Spiritual Renewal in Marriage and Family."

Pentecostals fit under the Evangelical umbrella, but they parted with their cousins in their insistence that first-century "gifts of the Spirit" – healing, prophecy, speaking in tongues – remain alive in Christian practice.

Disparaged in the early decades of the 20th century, their ethos of the Holy Spirit powerfully at work in worship and daily life eventually spawned the Charismatic movement within both Protestant and Roman Catholic faiths, and later, in the 1980s, a neo-Charismatic movement that created new denominations such as the Vineyard churches.

"Pentecostalism is no longer limited to the classic Pentecostal movement," says Dr. Miranda, who leads a Baptist church with a largely Latino congregation. "It's a biblical phenomenon that's gone beyond denominations and is part of the whole body of Christ."

Embracing a Charismatic outlook has "transformed our church from staid and traditional to very open to the moving of the Spirit," Miranda says. That includes "praying for physical healing, spiritual deliverance, allowing space for prophecy and tongues, and being open to changing the order of worship."

For Pentecostals, worship involves the expectation of "God's manifest presence." Praise and a lively, upbeat music characterized their services from the start.

At Lion of Judah church on Easter Sunday, jubilant singing interspersed with prayer filled the first hour of the service. Celebratory music (backed by a band with drums, flute, saxophone, violin, and guitar) gave way to quieter songs, leading up to the sermon on "being a disciple, not just a Christian." Then came the altar call for those seeking prayers, with gentle music continuing in the background.

Music is central to Pentecostal worship and, some say, to its inroads into people's hearts. Some scholars call it one of the two roots of gospel music. Elvis Presley visited the Church of God in Christ (CGC), the largest Pentecostal denomination today. It is largely black, though it has always had white clergy and members.

"Musicologists note that jazz, blues, and other singers talked of going to black Pentecostal churches to learn new riffs, runs, and chords because the style was open to improvisation," says Dr. Daniels, ordained a CGC pastor. "The liveliness and jubilance was attractive to many people."

Indeed, praise songs and the expressiveness of Pentecostal worship, including the lifting up of hands, has spread through Evangelical churches and non-denominational megachurches.

Yet the focus on "gifts" identified in the book of Acts is also characteristic and has resonated with people across the globe, while putting off some in the West.

The 1906 Azusa revival began with the preaching of William Seymour, a son of former slaves. Seymour had learned about Holy Ghost baptism and speaking in tongues from a minister in Houston. The speaking in tongues that erupted among the small group stirred controversy throughout Los Angeles and began drawing huge interracial crowds. Thousands came to the revival, which went on continuously, every day for three years.

Where the Pentecostal revival began

The belief that Jesus' return was imminent spurred a missionary movement. Many departed for other countries to evangelize.

Barry Corey, a dean at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in South Hamilton, Mass., explains the zeal for spreading the gospel. In the Assemblies of God denomination, for instance, "after one becomes a Christian, there should be a second experience: the baptism of the Holy Spirit," he says. "This empowerment enables the believer to have an extra zeal that is miraculous – it's like a turbocharged faith."

Speaking in tongues isn't essential to be a Christian, but a sign of that second baptism, he adds. Some people may receive the gift of healing or prophecy.

Assemblies of God last year grew more rapidly than any other religious denomination in the US, though only by 1.81 percent.

As Pentecostalism matured, it also became more middle-class. Long known for its anti-intellectualism, recently the movement has developed colleges and universities. Most denominations have no formal education requirements for ordination, Dr. Corey says. "If God has called you, you go and preach."

Some Pentecostal pastors preach a "prosperity gospel" that stirs concern. "It's lending itself to corruption and leaders benefiting excessively," Miranda cautions.

Despite such challenges, this is an invigorating time for the Pentecostal/Charismatic movement. Its dramatic growth in the developing world has come as millions moved from rural life into huge cities. "People living on the edge of life don't have a lot to fall back on, and they need the miraculous provisions of God just to sustain them," Corey says.

To the faithful, this is the work of the Holy Spirit. The movement's global appeal can be seen also in its adaptability and the fertile ground for its teachings.

"Pentecostalism has the ability to translate itself into the language and culture of the people being reached, drawing on local music," says Leslie Callahan, who teaches religious history at the University of Pennsylvania. "Also, most of the rest of the world believes in some sort of metaphysical healing."

While missionaries born out of Azusa (and a similar revival in Wales) planted the seed, indigenous leadership has taken over abroad, and the reverse missionary effort is under way.

Marriage . . . *continued from page 7*

history at Princeton, reflects on the economic role of the family. Much attention has been given to the interaction between the state and markets, he notes, but relatively little to the impact of the family on the economy.

The family, James points out, is not only a source of stability, but also of dynamism, creativity and innovation. A look at economic history, and the situation in many countries today, quickly reveals the importance of family-run businesses. More than three-quarters of registered companies in the industrialized world are family businesses, and in Europe some of these include some very large enterprises.

Economist Jennifer Roback Morse takes issue in her essay with no-fault divorce. Turning marriage into a temporary contract not only has had serious social consequences. It also has weakened the institution itself, making it easier to argue for same-sex marriage, she argues.

Marriage, Morse explains, is a naturally occurring pre-political institution and plays a vital intermediary role in society. Its weakening leads the state to a far greater intervention in our lives. This happens through the expansion of welfare activities in dealing with the consequences of broken families. It also prompts the state to conceive of itself as the arbiter of marital and family structures, which can be remade in any variety of forms it pleases.

Consequently, society loses the functioning of a vital social institution – marriage and the family – that previously acted as a mediator between individuals and the state, Morse contends.

The economist also compares the marriage contract to a business one. No-fault divorce in reality is unilateral divorce, she notes, whereby one partner can simply break up a marriage, depriving the other of any possibility to contest the issue. Imagine the impact on the economy if this were the standard type of business contract, Morse points out. How would we do business if the law made no distinctions between those who kept the terms of a contract and those who don't?

Church

Church leader's vision of new dawn for Zimbabwe draws cheers

David Wanless

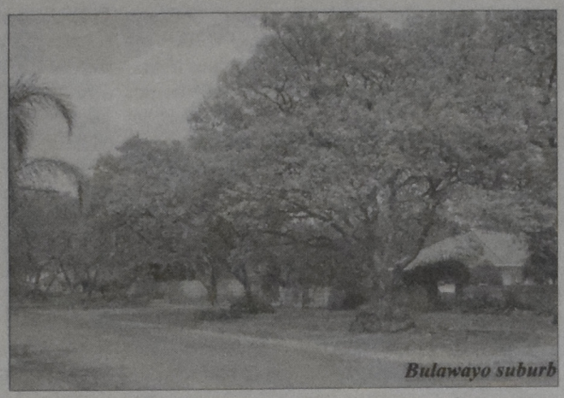
Bulawayo, Zimbabwe (ENI) – For a visitor to the country, or the consumer of news reports, the numbers in Zimbabwe are staggering and depressing, whether they relate to the economy, inflation, or HIV infection. But some Christians in the southern African country, which this week celebrated 26 years of independence, still believe there is reason to hope.

On a recent weekend, when the funeral of liberation struggle hero James Chikerema was carried live on national television, workers in an old-age home in the eastern city of Mutare were shown on state TV striking in protest against a monthly wage of 1.8 million Zimbabwe dollars (US$18).

Chikerema was a cousin of President Robert Mugabe and raised at the same Roman Catholic mission but his criticism of the Zimbabwean leader was said to have denied him a burial at Heroes Acre, a resting spot for those in the ruling party's faithful who fought for liberation. "It is not everybody who qualifies to be buried at the Heroes," said Mugabe in a statement in the government-run *Herald* newspaper.

Zimbabwe's Central Statistical Office reported on April 7 that inflation for March had climbed to 913 per cent, the highest in the world, according to the International Monetary Fund. Trade Union leader Collin Gwiyo was reported by Agence France-Presse as saying the average worker would need 25-30 million Zimbabwe dollars (US$253-302) a month to make ends meet.

There are other signs of an economy that is estimated to have shrunk by up to 40 per cent in the past five years. Because they cannot afford the bus or taxi fare, hundreds of people can be seen walking to work – or in search of it. Filling stations rarely have petrol and many have an abandoned look. Supermarket shelves are often without stocks of staples such as maize, rice, sugar and cooking oil in a country that was once considered the breadbasket of Africa.



Bulawayo suburb

But you can buy a medium-sized slab of chocolate for 450,000 Zimbabwe dollars. On Sunday afternoon, minibus taxis full of football fans returning noisily from a match won by a local team, give an impression that normal life goes on.

One church leader told Ecumenical News International that the bags of maize seen on sale at a roadside stall in a suburb of Bulawayo were probably obtained by corrupt means and the price mark-up put their purchase beyond the reach of the ordinary citizen.

Other Zimbabwean numbers seem even more depressing. Although the HIV infection rate has reportedly declined slightly, the World Health Organization has stated that because of the pandemic and the breakdown in health services, average life expectancy for Zimbabweans in 2006 has dropped to 36 years, making it the world's lowest.

Still, at church services in Zimbabwe's second city on April 2, Passion Sunday, worshipers who spoke to ENI said they believed that God would bring change and improvement to their lives. Deacon Agnes Saymani, the lay leader of a congregation that meets in the open air while it struggles to raise funds for a church building said: "When we have faith in God, and work together, our needs will be met."

Later, at an ecumenical service in the Njube Congregational Church, after a march through the suburb to highlight the stigmatization of people with HIV and AIDS, factory manager Joseph Ndhlovu said, "We face shortages of materials. Although most of our production is exported and we have to surrender much of our foreign exchange to the government, we somehow manage to keep production going and pay our workers what we can."

Preaching at the service, the Rev. Prince Dibeela, a member of the central committee of the World Council of Churches, likened the hardships being experienced by Zimbabweans to those of the ancient Israelites during their exile in Babylon, who lamented: "How can we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?"

He drew parallels between the political, economic and spiritual hardships experienced then and now, but told the congregation that he shared their hope. His affirmation, "There will be a new day in Zimbabwe," drew prolonged applause and ululation from the congregation.

** Journalists and critics of the government can face draconian action. The names of some of the people interviewed have been changed for their own protection. Editors.*

U.S. study finds similarities between churched and unchurched

Linda Green

A U.S. study to better understand the needs of those who are spiritual but absent from church has concluded that fewer differences exist between "churched" and "unchurched" people than one might think.

The United Methodist Board of Discipleship and United Methodist Communications participated in a joint research project to better understand the needs, preferences, motivations and behaviors of "spiritual seekers" in two age groups: 21-40 and 41-60.

Rev. Dan Dick, research manager at the Board of Discipleship, said people both inside and outside the church desire connection, feel something missing in their lives, contemplate a "higher power" and want their lives to have meaning and purpose.

"There are fewer differences between 'churched' and 'un-churched' people than we are often led to believe," he said.

The research focused on people who are spiritually open and receptive, have no strong opposition to a mainline Protestant denomination, feel something missing in their lives, and seek deeper meaning and purpose.

The discipleship agency's primary focus was on the spiritual condition of seekers who have no affiliation with an organized church. United Methodist Communications wanted information for the continued development of the denomination's advertising and welcoming campaign and the brand of "Open hearts. Open minds. Open doors." Barna Research Group and Harris Interactive did the research.

Stop and listen

The study, "For Those Who Have Ears To Hear: Listening Outside the Church," showed the church was missing information that it needs for meeting Christ's challenge to reach out to people, Dick said.

"Much of our 'knowledge' of the un-churched is based on assumptions and poor information," he said. "Leaders of many denominations claim that we can't learn anything from those outside the church, (but) I believe that many of the observations, comments and criticisms of those outside the church have great value for those of us 'on the inside,' if only we will stop to listen."

Dick said that before the 21st century, the terms "churched" and "unchurched" existed to explain those who attended church and those who did not. Another term, "seeker," has come into wide use in recent years. "Spiritual seeker" has become an "industry standard" popularized by researchers to designate people who prefer the term "spiritual" to "religious" and who generally stay away from traditional church settings.

A related study released by Barna Research Group in March found that "absence from church life does not indicate a lack of commitment to the Christian faith." The research indicated that three out of four unchurched adults who consider themselves Christian (77 percent) said they are either absolutely or moderately committed to the Christian faith."

Seekers biblically literate

Active seekers, Dick said, "are very good at articulating what they believe, what they want, and what they think." Spiritual seekers are as well-read, biblically literate and theologically aware as most people in churches – and often more so, he added.

What do seekers seek?

The study indicates spiritual seekers want:

* Full immersion experiences in which they can investigate the "deep places" of life in Christ.

* To be able to make a concrete, tangible difference in people's lives.

* To love, serve and help.

"Seekers are their own harshest critics; they want to be better," he said. "They are deeply committed to continuous improvement and learning, (and) want to connect with others that will challenge them and nurture ongoing spiritual development."

In looking at the two age groups (21-40 and 41-60), the study shows both are seeking meaning, purpose, acceptance, respect, a chance to make a difference and hope for the future, Dick said.

People 21-40 place a higher value on pushing limits, exploration, taking risks, and wanting to be accepted for who they are, he said. The 41-60 group places a higher value on fitting in, understanding why things work the way they do, the meaning and purpose of life, and comfort and security issues.

Other conclusions found in the study show faith issues are very important to people, whether they attend church or not, and that there are many actively practicing Christians in the world who do not attend church – not because the church demands too much, but because it demands too little, he said.

"Most church leaders are surprised to find that so many of the unchurched are active spiritual practitioners," he said.

The study indicated three fundamental reasons people don't attend church: they don't like/agree with the church, they are apathetic/unmotivated to go to church, or they find that the church does not offer them anything meaningful.

"Many of these people still consider themselves Christian," Dick said, "and these are the people we want to understand better."

Linda Green is a United Methodist News Service news writer based in Nashville, Tenn.

Opinion

Triumph of thuggery

Harry Antonides

The key issue at stake in the battle over the twelve Danish cartoons of the Muslim prophet Muhammad is this: Will the West stand up for its customs and mores, including freedom of speech, or will Muslims impose their way of life on the West? (Daniel Pipes)

What the furor about the Danish cartoons has exposed is the double standard applied by the mainstream media. They like to pride themselves on being courageous defenders of our basic freedoms. But when the crunch is on and when real courage is called for in the face of Muslim fury, the very same defenders of freedom turn tail.

They enthusiastically defend the freedom of artists to offend Christians by "artwork" that ridicules the most sacred elements of the Christian faith. Furthermore, the same media is quite prepared to depict Christians as a threat to the public interest and therefore unsuited for public service. There is no risk in that, for Christians will not issue bloodcurdling fatwas or send out suicide bombers.

Surrender

In contrast, the very same critics of Christianity have developed very sensitive feelings toward Muslims, especially Muslims aroused to anger over what they consider to be insults to their religion. At least a few in the media are forthright enough to admit that they are motivated by fear. The editors of the weekly *Boston Phoenix* had the honesty to admit that their decision not to publish the Danish cartoons was based on: *fear of retaliation from the international brotherhood of radical and bloodthirsty Islamists who seek to impose their will on those who do not believe as they do. This is, frankly, our primary reason for not publishing any of the images in question. Simply stated, we are being terrorized, and as deeply as we believe in the principles of free speech and a free press, we could not in good conscience place the men and women who work at the* Phoenix *and its related companies in physical jeopardy. As we feel forced, literally, to bend to maniacal pressure, this may be the darkest moment in our 40-year publishing history.*

This is a remarkable statement for two reasons. First, it is a chilling description of the depth of humiliation suffered by a major American organization, which in its own words has been forced to betray the very reason of its existence. It is painful to see this event described as possibly "the darkest moment in our 40-year publishing history."

This surrender to the fear of violence is the more offensive for taking place in "the land of the free and the home of the brave." This is the country that has dispatched many thousands of soldiers who at the risk of their lives are helping to free other countries from the very same tyranny to which the *Boston Phoenix* felt compelled to capitulate.

Second, it is this very honesty of this editor that deserves respect. To write as he does about "bloodthirsty Islamists," "being terrorized", and about bending to "maniacal pressure," in the current climate is itself an act of courage. It reminds us of that Italian man who was taken captive by Iraqi terrorists but refused to beg for mercy and died while defying the criminals who murdered him in cold blood.

I realize this analogy does not quite work, but one should respect courage wherever it is found on the side of the good. That's why I find the media's explanations for not publishing the cartoons so hypocritical, especially when they claim that their decision rests on respect for the sensitivities of Muslims.

Hypocrisy

In an editorial on February 4, the *Toronto Star* proclaimed its abiding belief in our hallowed freedom of expression, even the freedom to offend. It found the violent outbreak of destruction and invective by crowds of rioting Muslims in many parts of the world "out of proportion to the offence."

But it considered the cartoons "problematic for another reason," namely, they "bait Muslims and risk inciting hatred by equating Islam with terror and evil." The editor also found the cartoons "gratuitously offensive," and therefore did not print them, though he affirmed the paper's right to do so.

The editorial proceeds nicely to balance the hate-filled anti-Semitic cartoons in Arab countries with the offending Danish cartoons. The former are extreme in their visceral contempt of the Jewish people all the while inciting their readers to destroy Israel.

The disputed Danish cartoons are mild in comparison. (The *National Post* of February 7, 2006 displayed a page of the kind of demeaning and cruel cartoons that are a regular feature in the Arab press.)

In true moral-equivalence fashion, the *Toronto Star* refuses to denounce in plain language the Islamist-orchestrated rampage of destruction and the threats on the lives of Danish citizens. All it can muster in the face of such evil is to say that it is "out of proportion to the offence."

It's bad enough that a paper refuses to come to the aid of its own endangered kind and take a stand against the enemies of freedom, but then to claim for itself the moral high ground is doubly insulting. Compared to that, the *Boston Phoenix*'s admission that it acted in fear is refreshing for its honesty, especially since it then proceeds to describe exactly the evil it is up against, namely Islamist-inspired terrorism.

The media's priority

What should be a priority for the media is simply to speak truthfully about events. On that score it does not take brilliance to sense that this cartoon controversy was deliberately exploited to fire up Muslim crowds into a frenzy of hatred and violence.

Muslim leaders, including the Danish imam Ahmed Akkari, contrived to make matters worse by displaying three cartoons that were never published, but they were degrading and far worse than the ones in the *Jylland Posten.* The instigators have gone out of their way to inflame crowds of protesters who called for the death of cartoonists, destroyed the Danish and Norwegian embassies in Damascus, began boycotting Danish products and beating up shopkeepers who sell them, and generally, unleashed a mindless fury that is part and parcel of an ongoing campaign of contempt for the democratic West.

It needs to be stressed that the main issue in the Danish cartoon controversy is not the cartoons themselves, whether they are well crafted, wise or foolish, or even whether they strayed into the area of religion where cartoons should not enter.

The real issue is the one articulated by Daniel Pipes at the outset of this article. Flemming Rose, the editor of the Danish paper in which the cartoons appeared, similarly pointed out that if Muslims insist "that I, as a non-Muslim, should submit to their taboos ... they are asking for my submission."

In other words, what is at stake here is the imperialistic ambitions of a certain kind of Muslims who trace that ambition directly to the Koran, their final and absolute authority in all things, including the affairs of state. They believe that it is their sacred duty to follow their revered prophet in seeking to convert the whole world to the will of Allah.

In such a world, democracy is really a form of blasphemy, and Christians and Jewish people are the chief obstacles. The good news is that a few in the Western media and among the political leadership are aware that the real conflict is between the free (as yet) West and a tyrannical form of Islam. They refuse to submit.

An appalling precedent

The bad news is that a great many in the West do not want to confront this ugly reality. Many are prepared to cave in while thinking that at least they will be able to enjoy peace in their time. Even the Danish paper has apologized for publishing the cartoons, no doubt influenced by the boycott of Danish goods sold in the Muslim world. In fact the surrender of the Danish authorities was complete in the form of an agreement that will end the boycott. And herein lies a message that is deeply unsettling.

Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi, a terrorist apologist who led the anti-Denmark campaign, recently announced an end to the boycott of Danish products. This announcement came at an "International Conference for Supporting the Prophet" in Bahrain, attended by some 300 Muslim clerics. Also in attendance were representatives of Arla Foods, the Danish company that reportedly lost millions of dollars in forfeited sales.

This company published a groveling statement of respect

Triumph of thuggery..*continued from p. 10*

for Islam in Saudi newspapers. In addition, on March 26, it inserted a full-page advertisement in 25 countries, including the claim that because the company had gained insight into the Muslim culture and values over many years, it had been able to provide high quality products to its customers in the Middle East.

But there is more along this line. The terms of the deal with these Muslim countries had been decided at a conference of the Danish Foreign Ministry in Copenhagen. There, Amr Khaled, an Egyptian preacher had indicated that the boycott could end if the Danes would show their goodwill by financing initiatives in the Middle East, such as help for small businesses or health care.

Khaled had made his intentions very clear by stating on his Web site: "We will not accept a symbolic apology. We want them to take actions that prove their respect for the Prophet." Arla got the message and offered to start such humanitarian projects as helping disabled children and cancer sufferers.

While this shakedown was happening, the Danes received no help from other countries. They were on their own, and their humiliation was complete. The pious clerics proved themselves to be masters in the practice of bald-faced extortion. As Andrew Apostolou put it: "The beauty of the deal for supposed men of religion like Qaradawi is that the victim, Arla, is shaken down for the privilege of no longer being unfairly targeted." (*National Post*, April 26, 2006)

Apostolou rightly described this episode as "a victory for thuggery and extortion over free speech." And he predicts that the "lack of resistance to the vilification of Denmark by Middle Eastern regimes and their pet theologians sets an appalling precedent."

A phony accusation

Closer to home, the upstart magazine, *Western Standard*, headed by the feisty Ezra Levant and editor Kevin Libin was the lonely Canadian publication that published the contested cartoons (in its February 27 edition). The magazine was inundated with thousands of letters and e-mails – most in support, though also a substantial number against.

The response from others in the media was a mixture of off-the-record admiration and a high-minded claim of moral superiority for not publishing the cartoons out of respect for the Muslim faith. Leading politicians, including Prime Minister Stephen Harper, criticized the magazine, and major book outlets refused to carry the issue in which the cartoons were published. There was much clucking of tongues and shaking of heads.

The *Western Standard* took some precautions and hired extra security, but it did not encounter any violence or threats. Instead, it is now faced with the charge of hate mongering lodged by imam Syed Soharwardy, a Saudi trained imam who now heads the impressive sounding Islamic Supreme Council of Canada.

Soharwardy first unsuccessfully tried to lay a charge against *Western Standard* with the Calgary police. The imam had more success with the Alberta Human Rights Commission, which has agreed to pursue this complaint. This means that *Western Standard* is now forced to defend itself against a complaint that even according to Alan Borovoy, architect of the human rights commissions in Canada, amounts to abuse of this legislation.

If the *Western Standard* eventually wins this case, it is still forced to spend tens of thousands of dollars and an untold number of hours to defend itself. If it loses, it will mean a loss not only for that magazine but something much worse.

It will mean that we are responsible for squandering the precious freedom for which thousands sacrificed their lives in the past and some are doing so even till this day. It will be an utterly shameful day, most of all because we will have bargained away the future of our children.

However, I find it hard to believe that this charge against the *Western Standard* will be upheld, though it is troublesome that it is not rejected out of hand. So let's assume for the moment that this frivolous complaint will be dismissed. Even when that happens, the enemies of freedom will still score an important point; this complaint will have a chilling effect on all future public discussions about Islam. This kind of experience tends to make cowards out of most of us, as the public debate about this controversy has made abundantly clear.

In short, the *Western Standard* is right in defending itself against those who, bolstered by an imperialistic religious zeal, seek to curtail the freedom of belief and expression in this country. What is doubly annoying is that in their efforts to control and intimidate, these Muslims exploit the legislation and procedures that are rooted in our tradition of freedom and fairness.

This is not to condemn all Muslims, but to draw attention to the fact that there is a branch of radical Islam that seeks to impose a system of government totally alien to the best in Western tradition.

Three cheers for the men and women of the *Western Standard*.

Harry Antonides
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Pressures on farmers will hit pocketbook

Maynard van der Galien

Most consumers think about price – not animal welfare – when doing their grocery shopping

Think of all the people you know who retired from farming in the last 10 years or so. The farm was probably taken over by a son, or it was sold to a young family who wanted to farm. Maybe it was sold to a neighboring farmer who wanted to expand. The farm remained productive in agriculture. Profits could be made.

How many farmers do you know who want to retire now, but they have no one to take over the family farm? Many, right? They need the money for their retirement home. There are no buyers willing to pay what the farm is worth. It's a huge investment. No time off. Hired help is too expensive. And it's almost impossible to make a profit growing grain, oilseed crops or raising livestock.

That's a scenario that's played out right across Canada and in other countries as well. In European countries such as Britain, Germany and Sweden there are different reasons why farmers are leaving the industry.

Forty-two people leave the farming industry every week in Northern Ireland, says a report by the Ulster Farmers' Union. BBC News Online reports the findings are based on a census that shows 2,200 people have left the industry in the past year.

The union blames low product prices and excessive bureaucracy for the exodus, adding that cheap food imports are driving local farmers out of business. "It's time a fair and sustainable price was paid for local farm produce so that farm families can invest in their businesses and plan for a successful future," the union's president said in the article.

Another article on European farmers said the biggest single pressure faced by European farmers is not for better, or even safer, food. Nor is it connected with public reaction to manure leaks or heavy-handed chemical spraying. What hits the headlines most over here are animal-welfare issues and how European agriculture treats its livestock, says Norman Dunn, who writes about European agriculture from Germany.

This pressure has helped close down thousands of pig farms in Britain by demanding new housing system for sows. And it is currently hitting egg producers in Sweden and Germany with a total ban on cages for laying hens, says Dunn.

Meanwhile, the average consumer keeps on buying with a marked disregard for the production system involved, he said. The real power belongs to animal-welfare pressure groups with political clout far in excess of their comparatively small size. It is not the withdrawal of confining housing systems that is the problem. Such bans are planned throughout Europe in time. Dunn says it is their premature application in a few countries that is causing the real damage.

He gave an example. Look at the British, where confining pregnant sows to stalls was banned in 1999. Loose housing on straw took its place, an approach that needs larger buildings and more labor and therefore increased the cost of pork production. Meantime, the rest of Europe has until 2012 to change completely to loose housing.

The result: massive imports of cheaper Dutch and French pork into Britain, despite a spirited "Buy British Pork" campaign reminding customers of the welfare issue.

At the same time, Sweden charged ahead with its own ban on battery cages and is still fighting off imports of cheaper eggs from neighboring EU countries that have until 2011 to change over completely to alternative aviary or free-range substitute systems.

Once again, says Dunn, one egg looks the same as the next to most consumers, and most think about price – not animal welfare –when they're doing their grocery shopping.

Dunn says now Germany is bent on introducing a total ban on layer cages at the end of 2006. Guess what? Neighboring countries, especially new EU members in the east, are already increasing exports of their battery eggs into what they see as a bonanza market.

Politicians, he says, insist German consumers will vote for high-welfare systems by buying more expensive barn and free-range eggs. Experts, who know the way the market really works, are already advising: "Don't hold your breath."

Are you willing to pay more for free-range pork and free-range eggs?

Maynard van der Galien owns and operates the Old Towne Hall Restaurant and Tea Room in downtown Renfrew, Ont.

Fifty-seven orphans

Sonya VanderVeen Feddema

Thanh Campbell doesn't remember the fall of Saigon at the end of the Vietnamese War more than thirty years ago. After all, he was only a one-year-old. Yet that event shaped the course of his life. At a time when hundreds of thousands of children were orphaned – abandoned in burned out villages, on church steps, in hotel lobbies, and at orphanages – Thanh was left to be cared for at the Go Vap Orphanage.

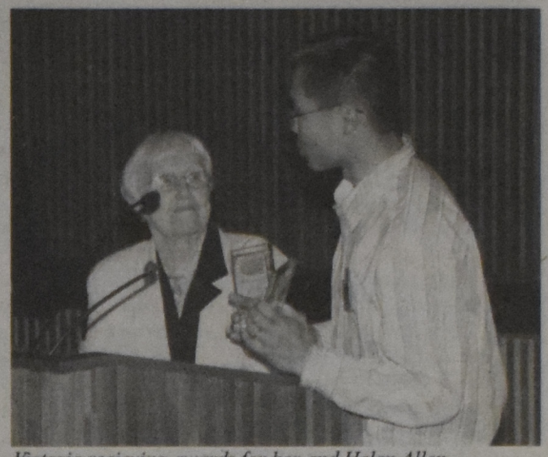
Unbeknownst to him, several American non-governmental organizations were asked to assist in numerous humanitarian flights to evacuate orphans from the country before the impending Communist takeover. The government of Ontario was also contacted directly by an organization called Friends of the Children of Vietnam. In response, the government commissioned Victoria Leach, responsible for adoptions for the Children's Aid Society, and Helen Allen to assemble a team of people to go to Vietnam and assist in evacuating orphans.

A preliminary trip to the war-torn country in 1974 to assess the situation was followed by an urgent call in the early spring of 1975 to immediately evacuate the orphans. Tragically, an American Galaxy plane retained for another airlift crashed with 300 people aboard upon flying into Saigon. Only a few people survived. As a result, the initial goal of evacuating 300 orphans wasn't realized. Only 57 children were evacuated on a Hercules cargo plane. Babies and infants, including Thanh, were placed two in a box.

Duct-taped to the floor, the boxes were held securely in place. The older children sat in the canvass seats normally used by paratroopers.

Flying in steep ascent to avoid unfriendly ground fire, the plane and its precious cargo set out for Hong Kong. Upon arrival, the children were lodged for two days at the Plaza Hotel. While there they were cared for by medical workers and examined by a Canadian doctor to ascertain whether or not they were fit to travel. From Hong Kong the children flew to Vancouver, and then to Toronto. Passengers on the Air Canada plane were each assigned an orphan to hold for the duration of the flight.

Upon arrival in Toronto, the children were brought to Surrey Place Centre, a psychiatric children's facility behind Queen's Park, in which two floors had been temporarily converted into a care facility for the orphans. For the following three months, until each of the orphans was well enough to be released to their adopted families, staff and volunteers provided twenty-four care.



Victoria recieving awards for her and Helen Allen

Several days after arriving in Toronto, Thanh was adopted by a Cambridge, Ontario couple, Rev. William and Maureen Campbell. He was welcomed into a home with five other children, two of whom were also adopted, but from within the province.

While growing up, Thanh was aware of the hair-raising details of his escape to safety because his sister had written a letter to Victoria Leach requesting a description of the flight. Although interested in his native country and culture, Thanh gave little thought to meeting some of his fellow escapees because he assumed it was impossible to locate them.

All that changed three years ago when Thanh, a graduate of Redeemer University College in Ancaster, Ontario, was preaching at Second Christian Reformed Church in Sarnia, Ontario. A couple approached him and said that they knew of someone who might possibly have been on the same flight out of Vietnam as Thanh was.

"I was skeptical," Thanh, says, "but I gave them my business card to pass on."

Much to his surprise, the following Friday he received a phone call from Trent Kilner, a Sarnia resident, who relayed the story of his flight to freedom, mentioning names of people involved in the flight – names familiar to Thanh.

"I knew he was a part of my flight," Thanh says. "The impossible had become reality!"

After Thanh and Trent met, they decided to search for other orphans who had been on the same flight. They publicized their story on City TV's Speakers' Corner. A subsequent meeting with Victoria Leach was covered by CBC National News and the *Toronto Star's* Sunday Edition.

"After those initial media releases many other media outlets caught onto the story. With every news story and article, we were contacted by more and more orphans, family members, doctors, nurses, volunteers and pilots who were involved with our flight," Thanh says. "Our story was across the nation and into the United States, reaching people and helping them get our contact information. Without the press we would not have been able to meet as many people as we have."

Thanh and Trent have had contact with 41 of the 57 orphans, and have met 36 of them personally.

In order to pursue their dream of having a reunion with all the orphans on their flight, as well as to express appreciation to Victoria Leach, Hellen Allen, and volunteers and staff at Surrey Place Centre, Thanh and Trent established the 57 Orphans Group website (www.57orphans.com).

The dream of a reunion became a reality on April 14-16, 2006 in Oakville, Ontario. Approximately 270 people – among them 35 former orphans – attended the event, which included a tour of the Surrey Place Centre.

"Most were looking forward to meeting us," Thanh says. "There seems to be an instant bond with those orphans whom we have met."

When asked what impact this entire experience has had on his faith life, Thanh says, "It has really brought home the story of God's grace in my life.

"I see how blessed a life I have had as a Campbell member. I have seen Trent's life transformed by Christ during the time we met. As a new brother in the Lord, it has made it all that much more worth it. I have seen a God that does have a special place for the orphan, and how he can make something that seems impossible, possible."

The Reunion committee first time in 31 years together at Surrey Place

Trent hugging a fellow orphan

Missions

Help! The roof is leaking!

Pattie Haveman, a member of Jubilee CRC in St. Catharines, Ontario left her teaching job about 2 years ago to work for the Malingunde Women's Training School of the Nkhoma Synod of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian in Malawi. This article is excerpted from one of her letters in which she shares something of her day-to-day experiences. Her letters read almost like a journal, and they allow us to see a different culture through her eyes, and to also experience something of the common humanity as well as the culture shock.

The Nkhoma Synod was established in 1889 and has grown to 124 congregations and 1,298 prayer houses (in congregations). It has long been a member of the Reformed Ecumenical Council and a partner of the CRWRC.

Pattie Haveman

Wawa. (Here I am)

Mwaswera bwanji, banja ndi abwenzi wanga? (How have you stayed, my family and friends?)

As you can see, my Chichewa is coming slowly – pangonopangono (little by little) as they say here. It took me ages to get a real nasal sound on the "ngo" part, and they wouldn't let me off until I said it properly. Now this is my favorite phrase – and it is the absolutely true here – *everything* is "little by little".

You'd think this would have improved my patience (or lack of, more accurately). In some cases this is true; in others, it has had the exact opposite effect and is, in the long run, my greatest test from God. Days in town are especially challenging for me as the number of slow people rises from the 40 around the campus to thousands. Needless to say, trips to the bank, the bakery, the hardware store and just commuting from one side of town to the other can drive me mad. In the end, I (and a few other type A azungus (white people) look like the idiots, as we are the only ones that seem to be disturbed by this snail pace.

My grade 7 teacher once said I should learn to let others help me. I see the value of his criticism (it weighed on me, as you can see, considering it has stuck with me all these years), but on an average day here, if I leave it to the locals, little or nothing gets done. The result has been that I either drive myself to exhaustion doing everything myself or the staff to frustration trying to get them to do it in my time or my way.

So I pray daily for more patience.

Sometimes I win. The other day I helped Mr. Banda, one of the watchmen, with the task of changing a light bulb. I held the ladder while he did the changing. It took about 15 minutes. I found myself at the bottom of the ladder laughing at my internal impatience. Outwardly I just nibbled on my cob of chimunga and smiled.

Sometimes I lose. Two weeks ago I was in the middle of one of my trips to town. As usual, I had too much to get done in one day but was determined it *would* be done. It was 3:45, which left me with 15 minutes to get to the bakery and then the Hydro company before it closed. But wouldn't you know it, some idiot parked his truck right in the middle of the service lane, blocking me in. As he was still in the truck, I gave him a few toots to notify him of the problem. It didn't seem to faze him, so I gave him a few more.

After about five minutes, he finally pulled out onto the main road only to turn into the bakery where I was heading. He got out of the truck and headed purposefully in my direction.

Oh no! I thought.

When he got to my window, he reached in and shook my hand, he smiled and said (in English), "You know who I am?"

His face did seem quite familiar although in my angry-turned-nervous state I couldn't place him. Turned out he is the brother of one of my staff members and uncle to "my" Benjamin.

Boy, did I feel like a class A loser! I tried to explain my frustration but ended up feeling even more stupid.

Thankfully Bornface came back to the car at that moment with the weekly purchase of buns and I was able to say a quick farewell before darting off to the traffic jam that separated me from the Hydro office. We did indeed make it to the office with one minute to spare (although they already had the doors closed and the key in the lock). However, nobody was able to tell me how much I owed on the school's six accounts – and neither could I, as I haven't received a bill in over six months. You can only imagine how happy this made me!

Lilongwe, Malawi, city center

Meanwhile, back at school, we continue to press on trying to get the US-sponsored project complete. Thanks to Wiebe and Jackie, the volunteer couple from Canada who was with us for four months, we have made good progress. The chicken coop was finished in February, complete with security bars and all. I've been out to the chicken factory by the airport a few times now trying to find out what preparation needs to happen before we take possession of the birds near the end of March.

We will have 100 eighteen-week old layers here at the campus and another 275 one-day olds at the community projects. Ours should start laying within a week, but the others will be more difficult as they will need to be given vaccinations, kept warm and monitored carefully for the first few weeks. Honestly, I'm a little scared of the whole thing but must remember that in this case, the local participants are going to have to take responsibility. If they don't, the birds will die and their money-making opportunity will go down the drain. I hope that's incentive for them.

The new (in November) soya/cassava garden looks good, or at least what's left after the monkeys got their share of the seeds. The old garden (vegetables), put aside for more important projects (guardhouse and chicken coop) was scary when I got back in January. The grass was six feet high in some places. I have been spending Saturday mornings with the boys weeding (and singing) and it is beginning to look like a garden again instead of a forest. We are taking our second harvest and using it to supplement the menu for the students – greens about once a week and peppers, eggplant and onions every other week. We're trying to get better at timing the crops and the amounts so that it isn't all ready at once, but it is difficult to stay ahead of the weeds and insects that are so plentiful in the raining season. And the monkeys haven't given up their occasional buffet either.

Last week God did the most wonderful thing. He brought what we needed to the gate. On Tuesday, we completely ran out of beans. As the ladies get beans twice a week, this left me with four days to find a new stock. Problem is beans are not in season till mid-March, and last year on our "quest for beans," Janet (Deputy Director) and I ended up traveling half the country, getting into a heated argument, and then being stranded in the middle of nowhere with a flat tire on our way home. I was not looking forward to having to do the same this year.

Lo and behold, the day-watchman (old guy switched off nights due to heart trouble) comes into my office (after a knock, bow and "Pepani, Amayi" – so cute!) and says; "Abambo ku magati, afuna kugulitsa nyemba (There's a guy at the gate who wants to sell beans)."

I said, "Mulungu wabwino! (God is good!)"

I went out to the gate and there stood a man with a 50 kg bag of beautiful fresh beans. I bought them (for a very good price) and the next day he came back with two more bags. We now have enough beans for the rest of the year. Two days later, someone came selling outdoor brooms, which the boys and students had been asking for, and the next day Janet came with a contact for Admarc, the government supplier of chimunga (at subsidized prices), which we are also desperately in need of but cannot get anywhere right now. We were given a promise of 20 bags when they get some in. I'm praying God will provide it soon, because if we run out of chimunga (which we will in 5 days) I might as well dig my own grave. (No exaggeration – they take their chimunga seriously here – 3 times a day.)

Reflecting on these things, I realize I haven't become less impatient. But instead, more aware of when I try to control everything myself and in doing so fail to trust God.

This is very evident to me in my relationship with my Deputy Director also. Right from the beginning, we have struggled to find a respectful working relationship with each other and regardless of praying together, we continue to clash on some key issues. I've thought many times of leaving my position early but through prayer and reading the Bible have felt God telling me to stick it out. I have recently come to the conclusion that my contract here is like a marriage contract – quite often it would be

Continued on page 15...

Ecclesiastes

The need for authorities

Who is like the wise man?
Who knows the explanation of things?
Wisdom brightens a man's face
and changes its hard appearance.
Obey the king's command, I say,
because you took an oath before God.
Do not be in a hurry to leave the king's presence.
Do not stand up for a bad cause,
for he will do whatever he pleases.
Since a king's word is supreme,
who can say to him, "What are you doing?"
Whoever obeys his command will come to no harm,
and the wise heart will know the proper time and procedure.

Ecclesiastes 8:1-5

A. A. van Ruler

Human life and human society are not transparent. Making sense of them is not easy. This means that we cannot derive any ultimate certainty from them about what is the good and what we must do.

In the meantime, however, life goes on, the life of the individual as well as the life of society. We do not stop our doings and dealings. But every deed raises the question whether what we are doing is good.

So while on the one hand it is impossible to know what is good, on the other such knowledge is indispensable and necessary. We cannot go on without it. In each and every thing that we do, we cut through the Gordian knot and hope that we are doing good.

We are thus caught up in a strikingly contradictory situation.

The search for a way out of this inwardly contradictory situation has continued from antiquity to the present by looking for a source of authority. What it comes down to is this: we say that we do not know what is good, but we need to know what it is, so those in authority must tell us what it is. It is up to the king to say what is good. Those in power should know. Let them figure it out. Let the politicians provide a solution.

In fact, when we become desperate, we sometimes even resort to dictatorship. Behind every move toward dictatorship is the hopeful thought that the dictator knows the secret of the universe, or at least of the historical process, so he can tell us what to do.

This authoritarian option is not entirely foreign to the Preacher; at least, he says quite emphatically, "Obey the king."

There's another side to the issue: beyond the good and beyond those in authority there is authority. But there is also society and order. We are never entirely alone. There are many more people besides ourselves and we must live together. Together we form a society, and every society possesses a certain order. There are laws and standards of decency. There are judges and there are rulers. Without these, the world becomes a war of all against all. Sometimes it does come to this, but usually people quickly shrink back from such anarchy. Under complete anarchy life becomes impossible. So there are usually those who exercise authority. They make life more or less viable.

Henry VIII by Hans Holbein

The Preacher says that we should submit to such authority, for it has many benefits: it makes life possible, it provides a form of social order, and we know what to do. We can also rest in the feeling that we know the good.

Frederick the Wise by Albrecht Durer 1524. Frederick the Wise is remembered as the man who saved Martin Luther from the rage of the Catholic Church. He was a man of conciliation and kept his territory out of warfare during his reign.

The Preacher puts forward a number of very different arguments to support his train of thought. Foremost in his thought is the idea that you must obey the king "because you took an oath before God." This may refer either to the oath of loyalty that the people swore to the king or to an oath that God swore to the king. In any case, there is a triangular relationship: man, the authorities, and God. And therefore the dimension of human authority is holy.

This means that to exercise authority is no picnic, for one then carries the burden of seeking the good for humanity. This is why all those in authority take first place in God's judgment; they especially will be called to account for how they discharged their task.

From another angle, the holiness of the dimension of human authority means that in it God's authority is conveyed to us; therefore, as citizens we are called to obey. We are called to obey for conscience sake, for God's sake and because of the oath we have taken.

In the actuality of political life, however, things are never so properly and purely religious. So the Preacher brings other arguments to bear.

On the one hand, he points to the power of the authorities. A king's word is supreme, he says (8:4). A citizen cannot stand up against such power. Who can say to a king, "What are you doing?" This too is a good argument for heeding what the authorities say. The authorities always have the potential for acting despotically, arbitrarily and unpredictably. Generally speaking, it isn't a good idea to stand up against them.

Of course, when things come to a boil, a revolution may erupt, but living in a perpetual revolution is not pleasant.

In a democratic society we seek as much as possible to protect citizens from the arbitrariness of those in power. But we must not imagine that even here things always happen purely according to democratic procedure.

However, the Preacher introduces yet another argument, a crude one. He doesn't mince words: he says that we should heed the king's commands because this will bring us least trouble. It is the safest course.

The world and life are never wholly transparent, and the authorities are never wholly just. So let's not seek to bend iron with our bare hands. That only brings turmoil and trouble. It is safest to keep the laws and commands of the authorities. This is the pathway to a pleasant life.

There are two more viewpoints to consider. First, the matter of human dependency. By all indications, the Preacher was subject, not to Israelite but to alien authority, perhaps to the Persians. Israel was simply at the mercy of other powers. Such a situation, where an occupying power holds the reins of power, reveals the fundamental dependency of man. We are never wholly in charge of our situation. There is always a measure of subjection. So the powerlessness of the individual is also a reason to heed the command of the king.

The second consideration is this: that everything has its own proper order and law. Everything has its own proper time and procedure (8:6). The authority and power of those who rule don't just drop out of the sky. They are not purely arbitrary. It is part of the very structure of our humanity that we are not just individuals but also part of a community; and therefore there is not just freedom but also authority.

While those in communist countries saw nothing but authority, we in the West in a fundamental and fatal way see nothing but freedom. But the structure of our humanity demands a synthesis of freedom and authority.

The series on Ecclesiastes can be found on our website at www.christiancourier.ca Click on feature articles.

Help! The roof is leaking! ...continued from page 13

easier to run, but you must make a conscious choice to stick to it. So I will.

BUT, I have decided that when my contract expires in July, I will take my leave.

One of our day-staff members, Amos, lost his two-year-old son in November – one of those unexplained sudden losses that are so common here. A few weeks back, two of his aunts showed up at the gate at 10:30 at night. They were at the health clinic across the road with Amos's wife, who was in labor, but it seemed things were not going well. They wanted me to drive them to a hospital in town.

I went back with them to the clinic to get a better idea of the situation, all info to that point in Chichewa. The attending nurse was not satisfied with how things were progressing, but I did not like the idea of driving to town in the middle of the night for many reasons – envisioning the baby coming on way, driving at night is not wise in Malawi, leaving the campus as Janet was away and watchman were understaffed. But on the other hand, I couldn't bear the thought of this baby not being born safely and healthy.

I went in to see the mother. She was exhausted and afraid that she might lose another child. I encouraged her to relax and trust God (easy for me to say). After a suggestion from the nurse that we wait one more hour, I went home – and prayed for the whole hour that God would bring this baby safely and not ask me to risk the trip to town.

I was called back to the clinic at 11:45 with nurse insisting that we should go. Before proceeding, I asked them to wake the Medical Officer up (lives on the hospital campus) to give his recommendation. Fortunately, as he went in to check on her situation, she began to push. Within five minutes little Funco was born. I was not in the room but very close – five feet outside the window, thanking God. Both mom and baby were healthy and well.

I was reflecting just yesterday on how the life of kids here is so different from that of kids back home. On my weekly town-trip last week, we were stuck in traffic and as I looked around (100s of people heading home from work on foot), I saw a little boy, four or five years old, trudging along in the crowd, no relative evident anywhere. This little guy had just bought some fruit and was shoving the change in his pocket with one hand and chomping into the fruit using the other. He looked like a man on a mission, like he was 20 years old and just going through the daily routine.

Later that day, in one of the small villages we drive through on the way home, I saw a little girl not more than two years old, running down the side of the road buck naked. There wasn't a person in sight that looked responsible for this girl; she was just a free runner, happy as could be. She paused to wave at me. Often girls as young as six or seven can be seen carrying a young sibling or relative on their back. Women will work in the fields, bent over at 90 degrees with a hoe in their hands and a baby asleep on their back, and when mum goes to fetch water with a big pail, the young ones go along with their little pails. Each carries their own full bucket home on their heads – what a picture!

Rainy season began mid-December; by mid-January, one can quickly identify where the roofing tiles are broken from the water stains on the ceilings. Wherever the monkeys have knocked off a few tiles, rain will run down the walls like it's Niagara Falls. In February, roofers from Nkhoma came to make repairs. I was a little nervous about this, as you may remember that is the crew that came last year and was responsible for the flooding and destruction of half of my house. They left the roof off over night and a storm came in at three in the morning. These guys assured me that would not happen again.

My weekly town trips increased to every other day. It was my job to purchase lumber and get it cut to 1 x 1 pieces (used to support the tiles). Can you believe that there is not one electrical saw in Malingunde! I had to go into the guts of the Old Town Market, dicker with the lumber sellers (who mob every white person they see), talk them into carrying my purchase (20-25 seven-foot pieces) to the cutter for me, then go through the same dickering process with the saw owner. I had to go into hyper-alert mode each time, as the slightest oversight would result in them either stealing from me or each other (which actually happened on one occasion).

Even though I would buy twice as much as requested each time, it was never enough, as the roofers discovered things were worse than expected once they removed the tiles. By the fourth trip, I was quite fed up and even dreaded it. The process gets no easier with practice; in fact, it gets harder because they try to get more out of you each time. Thankfully, things went fairly smoothly each time and I even made a few new friends in the process.

The roofers stayed for three weeks. On the day that they were to finish and go home, they got up early and began retiling the car port behind my house. We had been stealing tiles off this roof to repair more important buildings for the past year. Having received tiles from Nkhoma church, which was updated with metal sheeting, I was really looking forward to looking out my kitchen window to the quaint structure that was there when I first arrived.

At 7 a.m., I was in my bedroom ironing an outfit for the day when I heard a loud crash. I went to see, fearing one of the men had fallen off the roof. When I pulled back the dinning room curtain, I saw seven men staring down at a pile of rubble with their mouths hanging open. The whole structure had fallen over and come to rest inches from my house. It was surreal, and I actually laughed.

Malawi women

Once I had time to think about it, it made sense: it had large wood trusses that rested on 10 brick pillars – the main supports sitting at a dangerous angle. Once they began to add tiles, all on one side, the supports fell flat, sending the whole roof and all the pillars to the ground. It was a miracle not a single person (or bike) was hurt and the house was just far enough away to avoid damage also. I was extra thankful the car, crappy as it may be, was parked in the garage and not under the carport.

Although setbacks like these seem to be part of life here, I feel good about the fact that many of the big issues that were plaguing the school when I arrived have been dealt with. The bills are all paid, better promotion and written information is being circulated, the student roster is full, the cupboards are stocked, the library has books, the windows and doors have security bars, the pump is working well and pressure problems have been fixed. The two big concerns that continue to plague us are the longevity of the car (which is working well at this time) and the structural stability of the classroom and chapel.

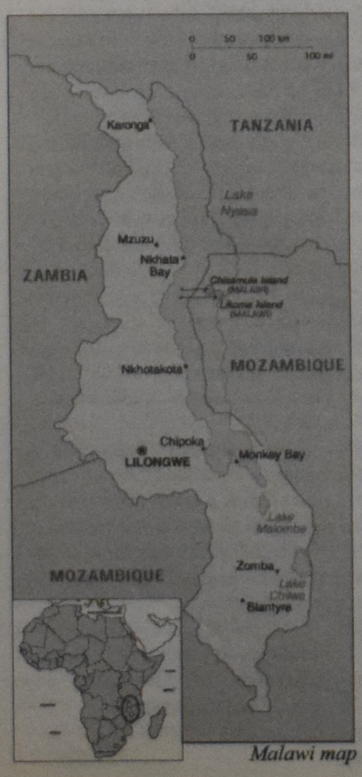
We can survive without our carport but I am fearful about the classroom building. When you walk in and look at the ceiling at the back of the room, you'd swear it's about to fall in. With a closer look, you can even see that one (maybe two) of the trusses has actually cracked. It depends who you talk to as to the seriousness of this problem. Personally, I think putting 30 students in that room every day for six hours is tempting fate. Nkhoma is aware but have offered no solutions.

I came back from Singapore with a new conviction to get a work team in from NA but the time is now too short, so I would especially like to ask for your help in this area. I project it will cost approximately CAN$8,000-10,000 to purchase the lumber and pay for the labor (local) that would be required to make the building sound. If you are able, please consider contributing toward this project.

If funds can be secured, I hope to begin the work in May or June. I also ask for your prayer support; I feel that if this project is not completed before I go, it may be a long time before it gets the attention it needs. I'm not usually into begging, but this is one case in which I think it is necessary.

To really go out on a limb, I would invite you to consider coming to help if you are skilled in the area of construction. It is not difficult to find workers here, but to find *skilled* workers is a whole other challenge. We were so blessed to have the Brinkmans come and help us with the US project, plumbing, mechanics on the car and building both the watchman's house and the chicken coop. Unfortunately, limits in finances and time did not allow us to get to the school house project while they were here. Maybe this email will tweek in you a call to hop on a plane and come to Africa for a few weeks. I can guarantee a nice place to stay (with plumbing and hot water) and plenty of only-in-Africa experiences!

**Contributions can be given through Burlington CRWRC to Carol Sybenga for Malingunde Women's Training School, Malawi.*



Malawi map

A window of grace

Alpha

Gertie Pool

Abbotsford, B.C. – A church program, called Alpha, is carving gratifying inroads in the Trinity Christian Reformed Church in Abbotsford, B.C.

"I call the Alpha program a window of Grace when I see the first five rows filled with prostitutes, prisoners, lifers and a few murderers come to worship with us and listen to the teachings of Jesus Christ," says Senior Pastor Sid Couperus

Seven years ago Trinity Church introduced the Alpha teaching program with two recovering drug addicts and twenty-five church members wanting to learn more about the program.

Attractive Alpha Course manuals present the basic teachings on Christianity with an interesting and easy to read approach that helps people to the basic faith.

After running their 21st Alpha teaching session, the church now sees an attendance role of 60 people attending the Alpha program in their search for healing and finding a better way of life.

Trinity church offers Alpha in eleven-sessions three times each year.

The evening starts off with a warm meal served and supplied by members of the congregation. After lunch a video is shown dealing with one of the 15 subjects before the assembly divides into six study groups and proceeds with a thorough exploration on subjects such as: Who is Jesus? Does God heal today? How can I make the most of the rest of my life?

The fourth week the group goes to attend a Holy Spirit healing week-end retreat.

Couperus notes, "So much healing takes place there as participants learn to express their feelings and try help each other with problem solving."

Pastor Sid's parents, members of the Maranatha Church in Belleville, Ontario first told Sid about the Alpha program.

Coming home Couperus went to a local Christian book store and bought the basic materials and instruction tape to get started.

"The ball start rolling from there on in. The first session we had two people come. Next time there were seven. They start attending church services. Next thing you know they brought a few friends along.

Each session we have a few graduates from the program who do become new church members.

"The very first testimony our church heard was an unbelievable experience for all of us. We had never heard how God worked so directly in the life of this former prostitude living on the streets of Vancouver, B.C."

"We also began to have disappointments. Some could not stay sober. Others went right back on the street. But the success rate outnumbers the losses by far."

"I can honestly say that it is nothing that we have done other then to be open and hospitable to the people God has placed on our way."

"I see Alpha as a window of Grace. I want to say to Trinity people you are doing it in your own quiet way. In your own Dutch non-emotional way. You are making a difference by chipping in to help nourish the spiritual welfare of our own people."

" Healthy churches are the best way to run the Alpha program because you have people with stable lives who are able to support the seekers in the Alpha program."

"I believe Trinity, and other established churches, do have so much to offer. We can help. And we are helping. We are being the body of Christ in a broken world," says Pastor Sid.

Many of the sixty people attending the 21st session wind-up banquet, on Wednesday, March the 22nd came to express their gratitude thanking the church for offering them a safe place, teaching them a better way of life and showing the way of eternal salvation in Christ in a non-judgmental atmosphere.

"I am so thankful you showed me a different and better way of living," said one.

Others summed up the Alpha program as, "Non-judgmental", "Assessable to everyone", "Approachable way to learn good things" "Becoming a part of a community" and "Being loved."

Trinity also offers additional courses to Alpha graduates entitled; Is life worth living? The BETA and the Catechism to further basic exploration of the Christian faith.

"The ministry in the 21st century is messy. If you want to do ministry, you've got to be willing to get your hands dirty. Be willing to clean the fish. Willing to get dirty."

"When I look over the congregation on Sunday mornings I wonder just what kind of seed is being planted? How will they multiply?"

"Alpha is a unique ministry. It is sloppy. It is messy at times. It's exciting and it's engaging," says Pastor Sid Couperus.

My window seat

Mendelt Hoekstra

Walking for MS

My younger sister has multiple sclerosis. She was diagnosed with the disease about two years ago when she was 26. Of all of my five siblings, I believe that God gave her the disease because she is the toughest of us all. She never complains and quietly shows others what contentment in all circumstances truly means. Happiness and sadness are extremes but being content in all circumstances takes true strength.

MS is defined as an unpredictable, often disabling disease of the central nervous system; the brain and spinal cord. The disease attacks the protective myelin covering of the central nervous system, causing inflammation and often destroying the myelin in patches. In its most common form, MS has well defined attacks followed by complete or partial recovery.

While it is most often diagnosed in young adults, aged 15 to 40, MS has affected children, some as young as two years old. The impact is felt by family, friends and by the community. MS is unpredictable, affecting vision, hearing, memory, balance and mobility. Its effects are physical, emotional, financial, and last a lifetime. There is no cure.

For the past 15 years, the MS Society of Canada has held a Super Cities Walk for MS. Last year there was a record $11 million raised, breaking the $10 million threshold for the first time. The Society's largest event fundraiser involves 160 walks in the spring and early fall with over 70,000 participants and volunteers in communities from coast-to-coast. It is an event, like many others, that is precipitated by the fact that little money is given by the government.

On Sunday, April 23, I was one of the walkers that took part in a Super Cities Walk. The walk was divided into three lengths, 2.5, 5 and 10 km. There were many people there that suffer from the disease. It is a sobering sight for people that have a loved one with MS. Because MS affects people so differently, there were people there with the whole range of the disease. There were those that could walk themselves as well as people that needed to be pushed in a wheelchair. There were people walking for some people that cannot walk themselves.

Each walker wore a bib that personalized and proclaimed who they were walking for. These are intriguing. Some people write that they are walking for all persons with MS. Some write that they are walking for their aunt, uncle, sister or brother. The ones that choke me up the most are the ones that say I am walking for my mommy or daddy, husband or wife.

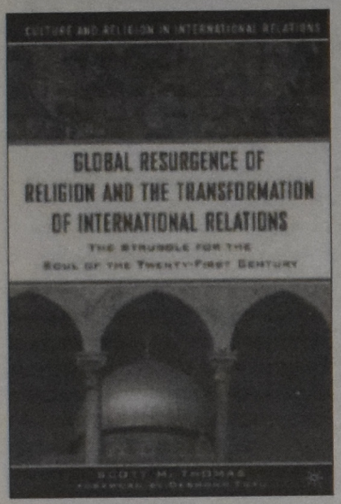
If you have ever taken part in an event that raises money for a worthwhile charity, you know what I mean when I say that the spirit during these events is contagious and thought provoking. It is an experience that is rich with love and time. No one was in a rush. No one was in their brand-name suits, driving in their SUV, late for a meeting. There was no talk about stock options or RRSP's. The talk was about the walk. The walk brought you past flowers and trees that you might not otherwise enjoy. It was one of those experiences that you wish everyone could be part of. Each person was there because they believe. They believe in the hope for a cure. They believe that raising funds will tangibly improve the lives of the people they love. They believe that one day there will be a cure.

When an event that is linked with a disease it often reminds us of the quality of life and the end of earthly life. The event moves you like a good sermon can; for many it reminds us that whatever my lot, Thou has taught me to say it is well, it is well with my soul.

Mendelt D. Hoekstra is a Music Therapist in the Niagara Region. He lives with Marisa and their two children in Vineland, ON. He can be reached at mhoekstra@bethesdaprograms.com

Review

A myth of liberalism



(Zenit.com) – The role of religion in the sphere of relations between states was the subject of a 2005 book by Scott M. Thomas, of the University of Bath, in England. *The Global Resurgence of Religion and the Transformation of International Relations* (Palgrave) looks at how religion is challenging traditional concepts held by many scholars as to how states and international society operate.

The "political mythology of liberalism," Thomas notes, "is the myth of the modern secular state as our savior from the horrors of modern wars of religion or clashes between civilizations." In addition, the terrorist attacks carried out Sept. 11, 2001, and since then, also raised concerns about the threat from religious fundamentalism.

But in part the worries expressed over religion's role in exacerbating conflicts is due to the fact that scholars have taken off their blinkers and their vision is no longer distorted by the limitations of materialism, positivism and Marxism. Religion has always been a part of politics, just as it is a part of society and culture in general, Thomas points out.

At the same time it is evident that we are in the midst of a sort of global resurgence of religion. This, Thomas argues, is due to a crisis of modernity, in which faith in the ability of science and technology to solve all problems is no longer so sure. This has been accompanied by a change in the nature of conflicts in recent years, so that intrastate divisions are now more common than interstate warfare. In these civil conflicts ethnic and religious factors tend to play a greater role.

Soulcraft and statecraft

While religion can sometimes be a cause of division, Thomas also notes that a variety of religious groups and traditions have helped in the area of conflict resolution. The increased role of what he terms "faith-based diplomacy" is not fuzzy idealism. Rather, it combines a twofold realism: one that takes into account the political problems and divisions; and one that is aware of "the world's divine purposes."

This diplomacy seeks to incorporate religion into the tools of statecraft and rejects secular rationalism. It also aims at a more far-reaching change in society, by transforming people's relationships with God and with others.

Thomas then asks: What does religion bring to the negotiating table? He answers:

Motives for peace are rooted in a deep religious identity and sensibility.

Religious leaders and institutions are familiar with local problems and are well positioned to act as mediators.

The prayers and ritual acts of religion can provide useful means in the process of healing and reconciliation.

Because of their spiritual authority religious leaders have a unique capacity to reconcile groups.

Thomas dedicates a chapter to argue that religion can play a vital role in the projects of building up civil society and promoting democracy. In the past, he notes, Western governments often supported a narrow range of organizations, mainly in the area of human rights and civic education, in attempting to promote democracy.

Often, however, these efforts have failed, or have had only limited success. A more successful approach, Thomas maintains, would integrate religious values into such efforts, since constructing a community and public life requires the support of local cultural and religious elements.

Another chapter is devoted to examining the interaction between religion and economic development. Successful development, Thomas argues, can only occur if social and economic change corresponds with the moral basis of society. Religion and spirituality, it would seem, have a vital role to play in a postmodern world.

BuildingTrust
Vicky Van Andel Ed.

Maid service

The Globe and Mail recently published five articles about living on a minimum wage. The articles were written by journalist Jan Wong. She had been asked to write a story about it because the minimum wage in Ontario has just gone up by thirty cents, to $7.75 an hour. To do justice to the people having to live on such a wage, Jan decided to try it herself for a month, as an experiment. She gave up her nice house in an upscale neighborhood, moved into small basement apartment and got herself a minimum wage job. She did this undercover. Her two sons went along for the experience. Her husband stayed home to take care of the house.

Jan made up a resume and posed as a single mother of two with a university education. She began by dropping off resumes at fast food places but got no response. Eventually she got a job with a maid service cleaning agency. She spent a month cleaning houses for middle and high income people. Her reports in the *Globe and Mail* tell what it was like.

She addresses four themes surrounding the experience. Her budgeting woes, the long hours she had to work, the fatigue from backbreaking work and using public transportation, and the gradual erosion of her self-worth. "There is no beauty in poverty," she said.

She found it almost impossible to make ends meet financially. After paying rent of $750 per month for a two bedroom basement apartment, without a living room, it was hard to budget for necessities such as groceries and transportation. She did not have enough money. A balanced diet went by the wayside. Transportation was an issue. A car was out of the question so, the bus, which was expensive and took time, or walking, were the only options.

Then the long shifts. She worked 12 hours a day, six days per week, usually with a partner, and cleaned three to five houses per day. Because she was able to drive, she was given the agency car to get from one house to the next. She discovered later, however, that driving between assignments was not considered work, so time on the road was not paid. Twelve hours of work meant the equivalent of eight hours of pay.

It was exhausting to drag the bucket with cleaning agents in and out of the car, and in and out of houses. Then there were the full pails of water to be lugged around. Add to that the scrubbing of walls, floors, counters, windows, and decrepit windowsills (sometimes with screw drivers). By the time she got home in the evening, she ached all over and felt physically drained.

In one article she writes about feeling jealous because her boys had come upon something good to eat (they also had very little money, but sometimes ran into good Samaritans). Her fridge contained a bottle of milk, a loaf of bread, and a package of sliced meat. Once in a while she bought fruit.

The experience brought out the best in the boys, though. It wasn't easy for them, but they were good to their mother and helped her in whatever way they could. One of the articles describes their experiences, written by them.

Over a period of a month Jan ran into a lot of interactions that were personally degrading. One major theme in her articles is that lower income people doing manual labor are treated poorly by those on a higher social rung. She shows lots of examples. She was talked down to, ignored, rudely spoken to, and generally not valued. She mostly functioned at the service of others. She had wanted to change her name, given that she is a well-known journalist, but quickly learned nobody recognized her, so she stuck with her own. She discovered how differently she was treated as a maid compared to a journalist. She also noticed that the deprivation of affection, comfort, and food that she experienced caused her to feel overly grateful for any scrap of generosity given to her by another human being. One day, when a client offered her a cup of coffee, she felt so grateful she would have cleaned anything extra he desired.

Jan also notes that in our politically correct world, the word maid, is still almost always used by cleaning agencies. And the people who do this work for agencies are all women. I'm not sure how the dictionary defines the word maid, but it does not sound self-esteem building.

House-cleaning privately pays much better of course. It bypasses the middle guy. When Jan asked why some of the women she worked with did not go private they said they didn't know how to go about it. They couldn't take a chance to have no work. At least the agency guaranteed $300 per week.

She received no tips except for a few insulting dimes. Clients rolled down the hours of work rather than up. On all sides she was pressured to give more than she felt was fair. What kept her going was knowing that she had a real life elsewhere, and this was just an experiment.

But for many people this is real life. They struggle every day to make ends meet, become physically and emotionally exhausted in the process, and then are looked down upon by others. We blame them for not pulling up their socks and doing better. It's a cycle and a trap.

What is striking is that in our supposedly egalitarian Canadian society many people are still treated as second class citizens. Not only do they work for low pay, but they are also treated badly in their relationships in their work. And most likely in their personal relationships as well because their self-worth has dropped so far.

What can we do about it? Be conscious of our interactions with others. Develop a deeper understanding of our own way of relating to others. Treat all people well. Show respect. Tip well. Have compassion and understanding for the negative cycles people can be in. Listen and help. Above all, we have to remind ourselves that to live means to make things dirty, and that cleaning is an acceptable part of life, and deserves our respect and a good wage.

Vicky Van Andel is the editor of this column. Anyone who would like to contribute to this column is invited to contact her via e-mail at: vickyv@telus.net

Welcome to my perch
Bert Witvoet

When a body meet a body

Bert Witvoet

Whenever there is a fifth Sunday in the month, we at Jubilee Fellowship Christian Reformed Church in St. Catharines celebrate with an evening service we refer to as a Strange Waters service. We chose that name because we believe that our Shepherd Lord leads us not only beside quiet waters but also beside strange waters ... for his name's sake (adapted from Psalm 23). The mission statement of this service reads: "To engage contemporary culture and reconcile our experience of it with God's intent for the church."

Here are some more statements we have made: We engage our culture to feel re-engaged with the church. With the Reformed confessions we say that creation, including humanity, is the second book of God's revelation. We critique church and society in a nonjudgmental environment. We avoid easy answers and don't ignore answers that challenge our current worldview. We use humor and irony to create a sense of discomfort and to show that we don't take ourselves and others too seriously. We embrace the arts.

Past topics at our Strange Waters service have included the following: Time, Technology, Animals(Dominion), Pleasure, Commercial Christianity, Hell, the Body. Last Sunday evening, the topic was "The Body." During such a service we try to do a skit, show a movie clip if applicable and encourage discussion. In the message part of the service, we addressed the question: "Should we place a lot of emphasis on our bodies?" Our answer? Yes, No and Yes again. Our answer had to do with three ways of looking at the body. We can look at the body from the point of view of creation, fall and redemption.

Creation of Adam by William Blake

The first "Yes"

This answer has to do with Creation. When we think of the fact that our body has been created, we think of it as being essentially good. God does not make junk. When he created Adam and Eve, he said, "It is very good." That included their bodies. It also includes *our* bodies. So there is no room in Christian thinking for the idea that our bodies are inferior entities, something we need to be ashamed of. God wants us to admire his handiwork; in fact, he wants us to love our bodies, and, yes, even admire them. He wants us to give praise and credit to him for them.

Have you ever stood naked in front of a floor-length mirror and thanked God for your body? I have. Now I'm no Michaelangelo's David. I'm not muscular, like some men. At my age I'm even less impressive than I used to be when I was 20. But I can look at my naked body and thank God for it.

Why? Because, when I look at myself in the mirror, I don't see an image that is supposed to conform to today's standards for beauty. What I see is an amazing and complex organism. My organism has been working for more than 71 years! It still looks half decent, and it functions well.

My wife, by the way, reminded me after the service that some people with serious malformations of the body or serious illness might have a more difficult time coming to that conclusion. She's right, and I can't speak for them. But I hope that for them, too, Psalm 139:14 applies: "I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, and I know that full well."

I hope all of us dare to stand in front of a floor-length mirror naked and give thanks to God for what he has made. I hope we all can love our bodies with a childlike faith. I hope we all refuse to compare our bodies to the seemingly more impressive bodies of other people.

Because our bodies are essentially good, we should want to take good care of them and listen to them. (We all fail in this respect from time to time. I know I do.) Because our bodies are God's handiwork, we must be good stewards of our bodies. We must show respect for our bodies. That means we try to avoid substances that harm the body. We should avoid addictions, which are hostile acts committed against the body.

Now for the "No"

Should we place a lot of emphasis on the body? The "No" answer has to do with our fall into sin.

First of all, because of sin, our bodies are affected by disease and they wear out. As a result, our fallen bodies are dispensable. In fact, they have to die. In Matthew 10:28, Jesus says, "Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather be afraid of the One (Satan) who can destroy both body and soul in hell." Although our soul and body are one, they are also distinguishable. If you have to choose between the body and the soul, you must choose the soul.

If you seek the survival of the body at all costs, even at the cost of sinning against God and your neighbor, you are in danger of losing your soul while saving the body, temporarily. If your right hand causes you to sin, says Jesus, cut it off. Because of the preeminence of the soul, believers have been willing to die for their faith. The death of the soul leads to the death of both body and soul. If the soul is not redeemed, the body is not redeemed. But the soul who entrusts itself to God will be saved for eternity and will be reborn into a new body.

According to the Bible, our bodies must be subject to the Spirit of God, to the instruction of the Word of God. Our bodies must also be subject to the spirit and soul of the person who is the body. Paul speaks of placing his body in the service of Christ. In 1 Corinthians 9:27 he speaks of beating his body and making it his slave. He uses the imagery of a boxer. Paul means to say that he denies himself the comforts of the body, and that he makes all his abilities serve the cause of the gospel so that he, too, may win the prize of salvation.

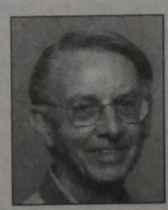
Elsewhere he speaks of "offering your bodies as living sacrifices to God." In our society it is quite common to hear someone say, "Well, as long as you're healthy, that's the main thing." Wrong! Having physical health is important, but it's not the main thing. There is a time and place for not paying too much attention to our bodies.

Finally for the "Yes" again

Should we put much emphasis on the body? My final answer is "Yes." I say, "Yes," because of redemption. Because of the work of Jesus, the body becomes again the temple of the Holy Spirit. We must value our bodies as sacred places where God dwells.

Secondly, we look forward to the resurrection of the body. This tells us that God meant body and soul to be one harmonious whole – because we cannot live without bodies. The resurrected body will even be more glorious than our present bodies. So we always honor the intent of the creation – we are bodies as much as we are souls. This comes to expression especially in our everyday talk when we call someone a Somebody. Even at Speedy's, "You're a somebody," not 'some soul'! No, a Some*body*. And that's why we never should consider anyone a no*body*. "

Because of this concern for the body, I kind of like the song, "When a body meet a body, comin' thru the rye. When a body kiss a body. Need a body cry?" And the answer for us as Christians is: No. A body need not cry when we meet another body. Because we belong body and soul to our faithful Savior, Jesus Christ.



Bert Witvoet is a former editor of CC, retired, and now editing the Christian Educators Journal, *preaching the occasional sermon and prodding the local Chr. School board.*

You can go back, but will you?

Lisa M. Petsche

Last week I received an invitation to the spring homecoming of a university I attended.

Some people automatically dismiss such notices, tossing them straight into the recycling bin. Not me, though.

Over the past two decades, I have been to numerous high school and university homecomings. Among the friends and relatives I've informally polled, though, I seem to be in the minority in looking forward to and attending such events.

In fact, many people speak of pending class reunions with downright dread or disdain. In contrast, I am eager for the chance to catch up with former classmates – with whom I spent a significant chunk of my formative years – about their endeavours since graduation (or since the previous reunion). I also enjoy the campus tours, seeing the old familiar buildings along with the new – and newly renovated – ones.

Being a sentimental type, I am easily transported back in time as I stand in the lobby of my former college dorm or one of the pubs I used to hang out at with friends.

Primarily the memories are good, of course, or I wouldn't return. The inevitable not-so-pleasant ones – related to workload pressures, career decision-making, financial concerns and dating woes – have either faded with time or been placed in perspective with the wisdom of age.

What is disappointing is that relatively few of my classmates are represented at homecoming events. (In fact, that's the reason some people give for not attending: that probably no one they know will show up.) Sometimes I've ended up socializing mainly with the director of alumni affairs, other faculty and my husband. But the food is good, I like being back on campus, and I'm always hopeful that this time there will be more familiar faces.

I have often pondered why more people do not attend class reunions. Obviously – more so than ever in this highly mobile society – many alumni live at a distance that does not make attendance feasible. But what about the rest?

Ironically, some don't attend because of proximity – that is, they live in the city where their alma mater is located. I suppose it doesn't feel as much like a homecoming if you've never left town, even if you haven't been on campus since graduation.

Then there are those extremely practical types who, once they've finished a chapter in their life, see no point in reviewing it. They don't have a sentimental cell in their body.

Others shy away because they anticipate that everyone else will have marvelous accomplishments to share, which will make their ordinary lives pale in comparison. If they attend a reunion at all, it will be to mark a really big milestone, such as their 25th or 40th post-graduate year. By then they may consider that they have something newsworthy to report.

Some alumni don't return – especially after the first five years – because they don't want to be reminded of the passage of time.

For many of my generation, absence from alumni gatherings also reflects a hectic, goal-oriented lifestyle, in which it's hard to justify, let alone fit in, activities out of the ordinary, especially if the expected benefits are not tangible or big. Indeed, homecoming events are often perceived as frivolous (in spite of the networking opportunities they provide). Society has become so future focused that people don't have the same inclination to revisit the past anymore.

Yet looking back is valuable in many ways. It gives a sense of continuity to our life, confirming our identity. It enables us to put into perspective events from the past, the time lapse, as well as maturity, affording us some objectivity. It also serves as a pat on the back, reminding us how far we have come and how much we have grown.

In other words, there is satisfaction to be gained in recalling not only the pleasant experiences, but also the character-building ones that ultimately shaped us in positive ways and revealed our resilience.

Of course, reminiscing is best done with others who were part of the experience being recollected. So the next time you receive an invitation to a class reunion, consider attending. You might be pleasantly surprised.

Lisa M. Petsche is a mother of three and a freelance journalist specializing in family life.

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Classifieds

Birthday

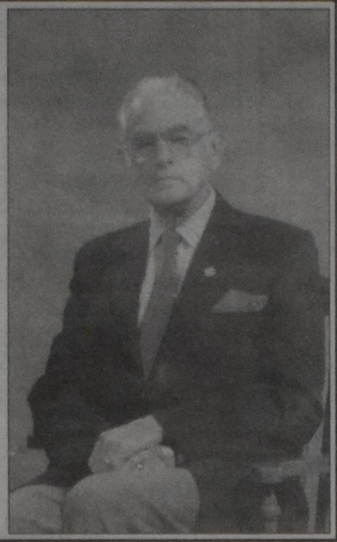
Bussum, Holland Barrie, Ontario

With deep thanks to God, on May 23, 2006,

JACOB (Jake) EIGENHUIS

will celebrate his **90th Birthday.**

We thank you Dad for your love, wisdom, and Christian example, and pray that God will guide your steps and keep you in his care.



His loving family
Wife of 64 years:
Lenie Eigenhuis (VanManen)
Children:
Marilyn & Pat Warren
Clayton
Leana
Bernard Eigenhuis & Alice
John & Ann Eigenhuis
Jeremy (Quinton)
Shawna

Address: Tollendale Village Apt 316
282 Hurst Drive
Barrie ON L4N 0Z3

Anniversaries

To God be the glory
May 1, 2006
Arum, Fryslan Guelph, Ontario

We are thankful that we were able to celebrate the **60th Anniversary** of

REIN AND GRIETJE BAKKER (Bruinsma)

Our Heit & Mem and Pake & Beppe have taught and are still teaching us valuable faith and life lessons. They enjoy the blessings of six great-grandchildren.

Address: Unit 216 - 70 Woodlawn Rd E, Guelph ON N1H 7W7

May 12, 1956 May 12, 2006

With thanksgiving to God, we are pleased to announce the **50th Wedding Anniversary** of our parents & grandparents

HENK AND JANE VERBOOM

We pray that God will bless and keep them in his care.
Ron Verboom
Dorothy & Harold Struyk
Andrew, David, Elaine, Steven
Brian Verboom

Address: #221-1415 Upper Wellington St, Hamilton ON L9A 5E8

Obituaries

1920 The Netherlands 2006 Barrie, Ontario

CHRISTIAN RUPKE

1 Thessalonians 4:13 and 14

On April 8, 2006 our husband and father Chris Rupke completed his earthly pilgrimage and went home to be with his LORD, joining those who went before him. He was in his 86th year.

Chris was a man who took seriously the call to take up his cross and follow Jesus in all aspects of his life. Equally he lived in trust and joy, experiencing that His yoke is easy and His burden light.

He will be greatly missed by his beloved wife, Katie (Mulder), his children, grandchildren & great-grandchildren.
Trish (Pat) Smith & Ton Lobert
Elisa Chilvers, (Katie and Courtney), Joel Smith
Ron & Margaret Rupke – Roxanne & Jim Van Farowe, (Grace and Kate), Sharon & Mark Siderius, (Esther, Joshua, Anna and Eden), David, James and Paul
Dan & Mary Rupke
Rachel, Natasha, Naomi and Rebecca,
John & Judy Alexander – Chris and Brandon
Mark Rupke & Wilma van Barneveld
Zach, Dina, Traivon, Hanna
Also missed by his brother Sierk & Hilda Rupke, brother-in-law John Rupke, sister Nell Verkaik, sister-in-law Ann & Hank Mein & many nieces & nephews.
Chris was predeceased by his son-in-law Dave Smith, his sister Tina Rupke and brother-in-law Peter Verkaik.

Correspondence address: Katie Rupke
Apt 217 - 290 Hurst Drive, Barrie ON L4N 0Z3

Personals

Christian widower mid 60, dutch descent who enjoys traveling and listening to music likes to meet a lady with similar interests.
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1946 May 22 2006

With praise and thanksgiving to God, we hope to celebrate the **60th Anniversary** of our parents, grandparents and great-grandparents:

JACOB AND ALICE (AAFKE) BYMA
(nee **BOERSMA**)

Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever. Psalm 107:1

With love from the family:
Freda Bryant
Sid & Linda Byma
Mike and Sara (Mikaela)
Rob and Jessica (Brianna)
Jeff
Tim & Barb Kane
Brian
Matt
Tony
Ralph & Debbie Byma
Brittney

Home address: 727 Birchwood Ave
Cambridge ON N3H 2V6

I lift my eyes to the hills, where does my help come from? My help comes from the LORD, Maker of heaven and earth. Psalm 121:1-2

HENNY DEROO (nee **Steenbergen**)

After a short courageous battle with cancer she has gone home to be with Jesus.
Born on November 5th, 1932 in Koekange, The Netherlands.
Passed away on Sunday April 30th, 2006 in Strathroy, Ontario, at home surrounded by loving family members.

Loving wife of Hilbert DeRoo, married for 53 years.
Dear mother of:
Mary & Jack Beeksma, *Prince George, BC*
Laura & Mike, *Calgary AB*
Adam, *Calgary, AB*
Tilda & Syd VanderHoek, *St. Thomas, ON*
Alyssa & Dave, *St. Thomas, ON*
Terry & Nicole, Alexander, *Ingersoll, ON*
Jonathan, *Grand Rapids, MI*
Erika (†2002)
Jim & Reine DeRoo, *Kitchener, ON*
Brad, *Guelph ON*
Brian, *Kitchener, ON*
Sarah, *Kitchener, ON*
Harry DeRoo & Elaine Cote, *Dhahran, Saudi Arabia*
Judy & Greg Hager, *Aniak, Alaska*
Deanna, *Chicago, Ill*
Zachary, *Grand Forks, ND*
Ron & Sonja de Roo, *Stouffville, ON*
Hanneke, *Stouffville*
Jacob, *Stouffville*
Linda DeRoo, *Strathroy, ON*
Paula DeRoo, *Strathroy, ON*

The funeral was held on Wednesday, May 3rd, 2006 East Christian Reformed Church, Strathroy, Ontario.

Correspondence: Hilbert DeRoo, 178 Southfield Drive, Strathroy ON N7G 3V4

Classifieds Rates

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION: *Christian Courier* is published on alternate Mondays. Copy deadline for each issue is 9 a.m. Tuesday, 13 days prior to publication date.
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Obituaries

Koekange, November 5, 1932 Strathroy, April 30, 2006

Early Sunday morning our LORD took home and into his care after a short illness our dear sister and sister-in-law

HENNY DEROO-STEENBERGEN

Tim & Ann Steenbergen, *Abbotsford BC*
Arendina Hessels, *Dwingeloo Dr*
Ernie Steenbergen, *Penticton BC*
Lammie & Henry Rumph, *Grimsby ON*
Swansea & Gerry Fluit, *St Catharines ON*
Tiny Vanden Berg, *Drayton ON*
Fygje & Tieme Van Dyk, *Ruinerwold Dr*
Roelof & Janny Steenbergen, *Koekange Dr*
Lutina & Hendrikus vander Veen, *Aalsmeer NH*

Predeceased by two sisters and four brothers-in-law.
May the LORD comfort her husband Hilbert, his children & grandchildren.

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The **fiftieth** (and last...)

Frisian service in W. Michigan will be held on **Sunday, May 21**, at **2:30 p.m.** in the **Brookside CRC,** 3600 Kalamazoo SE, Grand Rapids
Rev. Louis Tamminga will preach.
He also led the first one, fifty years ago.

The LORD called unto himself from Toronto General Hospital on Tuesday April 25, 2006 in her 69th year

COBA (JACOBJE) VANDER WAL

after 48 years of marriage.

Beloved wife of Raymond (Reimer) Vanderwal.
Dear mother & mother-in-law of John & Annie of *Pembroke*, Corwin & Joanne of *Slave Lake, Alta*, Jennifer & Peter Lapping of *Deep River* and Teresa & Mitchel Duval of *Pembroke*. Loving grandmother of Cheyenne, Jamie, Shawnee and Skye.
Coba and Ray 'adopted' the family of Jan & Wilma Welink and their children Megan, Ryan and Thomas into their hearts and family.

Address: Ray VanderWal #110 - 76 Towncentre Dr Valleyview, Townsend ON N0A 1S0

I trust in you O LORD; I say, "You are my God." My times are in your hand. Psalm 31:14-15

On April 25, 2006 the LORD took to himself our dear sister and sister-in-law

COBA VANDER WAL

Beloved wife of Riemer

Riek Rook, *Cobden Ontario*
Dirk & Gerrie Rook, *Cobden, Ontario*
Jacob & Grietje Rook, *Cobden, Ontario*
Harmke & Dirk Zomer, *Woodstock, Ontario*
Henry & Cora Rook, *New Westminster, BC*
Harm & Elizabeth Rook, *Cobden, Ontario*

Classifieds / Job Opportunities

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Associate Director-Human Resources
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Tel: 905 892 4332
rklassen@mutualsupport.net
www.mutualsupport.net

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The Lighthouse ministry is a multicultural Christian Community Centre in downtown Toronto, with the mission to show God's love in action to the new immigrant, the refugee, and the poor.

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Peter Jagt, Secretary of The Board
154 Cottonwood Drive
Don Mills ON M3C 2B4

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John Van Pelt
Chatham Christian High School
475 Kiel Drive South, Chatham ON N7M 6L8
phone 519-352-4980, fax 519-352-4041
E-mail: johnvanpelt@chathamchristian.ca

DIRECTOR OF YOUTH MINISTY

Covenant Christian Reformed Church in Woodstock,Ontario

We are looking for a **Youth Director** (50% position) who exhibits a vibrant personal faith, relates well to youth, shows maturity in character, and is committed to the Reformed faith.

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Please send letter and resume to:
Covenant CRC, Attn: Search Committee,
410 Lansdowne Ave. Woodstock ON N4S 1J2
or email to: **woodcovadmin@bellnet.ca**

Retirement Celebrations

Come Celebrate with us!

MR. GARRY GLASBERGEN, Principal, and **MRS. FEMMY WALPOT**, V.P. and Grade 1 teacher are retiring after this school year.
Both have taught for 39 yrs and have touched so many lives and for this we give thanks. The Jarvis District Christian School Society would like to show their appreciation on:

Date: **Friday, June 2, 2006 from 7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.**
(Open house and short program)
Where: **Jarvis District Christian School Gymnasium**
Presentation of a gift and words of congratulations will be spoken at 8:00 p.m.

COME CELEBRATE! the 33 year career of
MR. WILLIAM (BILL) THIES,
Wellandport Christian School Administrator.
OPEN HOUSE RETIREMENT PARTY
to be held at Wellandport Christian School on
Sat., May 27, 2006 from 1 - 4 p.m.
84008 Wellandport Road, Wellandport, ON.

If you would like to attend or be involved in the program please contact Lorraine at wcs@wellandportchristianschool.ca or call 905-386-6272.

STOUFFVILLE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

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scsjake@bellnet.ca
or call **905-640-3297.**

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has a **possible opening** for a **junior high English/social studies teacher**

Please forward a resume including a statement of faith, and a summary of your Christian educational philosophy to:

Ed DeYoung, Principal,
Immanuel Christian High School
802 – 6th Ave. N, Lethbridge AB T1H 0S1
Phone: **403-328-4783** Fax: **403-327-6333**
email: **ed.deyoung@gmail.com**

GREENHOUSE HELP WANTED:

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Classifieds

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Vernon – CJIB	9:30 pm	94	
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Jesus Christ is end of all, and the centre to which all tends. Whoever knows Him knows the reason of everything. ... Blaise Pascal

HOLLANDSE DAG
June 14 10 am.
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A Christian Retirement Community

Events/Advertising

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

May 12,13 Jarvis District Christian School, 50th anniversary. On Friday evening – dinner and an evening program. Tickets available from February 15 to March 31, 2006. Seating is limited. Payment of $50.00 per ticket must accompany order. Various activities are planned for Saturday concluding with a service of Thanksgiving at the neighbouring CRC at 7:00 p.m. For more information visit www.jdcs.ca and to purchase tickets contact Marcia Cota (519)587-3111.

May 21 Dutch Service will be held in the **Ancaster** Christian Reformed Church at 3:00 p.m. Rev. Ralph Koops will be preaching.

May 21 Frisian worship service The **fiftieth** (and last...) Frisian service in W. Michigan will be held on **Sunday, May 21**, at **2:30 p.m.** in The **Brookside CRC,** 3600 Kalamazoo SE, Gr. Rapids. Rev. Louis Tamminga will preach. He also led the first one, fifty years ago.

June 3 Calvin Christian School, **Drayton**, ON, is Celebrating 50 years of Christian Education! Celebrate with us! Open House at the school noon until 5 p.m. Evening program at 7:30 p.m. at the Drayton CRC. For details phone 519 638 2935 or go to website: www.calvchri.org

June 14 Hollandse Dag, 10 a.m. at 310 Kingscourt Ave., **Kingston**, Ont. Speaker: Mr James Kooistra. For information, contact E. Hiddema at 613-546-5615

June 14 Hollandse Day, **Moorefield**, Ont. Community Centre, 10 a.m. See ad for details.

Oct 27-29 Hamilton District Christian High School 50th anniversary weekend. For information about activities or to register as alumni: www.hdch.org or 905.648.6655

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As oil rises, people are turning to cleaner energy sources

Ron Scherer

NEW YORK– With the price of oil climbing to $75 per barrel, demand is rising for a wide array of alternative energies – from wind turbines to cars fueled by corn oil.

While such devices and fuels always capture attention during spikes in oil prices, the alternative-energy movement is moving well beyond the novelty phase. It is becoming more ingrained in the power grid and in middle-class homes as technologies improve. Toyota predicted the sale of 100,000 of its Prius hybrid cars in the US this year.

Even solar panels and windmills, often associated with the fuel crisis of the 70s, are showing up in suburban neighborhoods and other unexpected places. For example:

- An entrepreneur wants to put windmills atop old oil and gas rigs in the Gulf of Mexico and send the power ashore.
- For the first time nationally, Home Depot will be selling solar devices alongside its plumb bobs and Behr paint.
- Gasoline marketers in cities across the US are blending ethanol into their gasoline – not for environmental reasons, but because it's now cheaper than some oil-based additives.

Wind farm in Alberta

Although alternative fuels still make up a small fraction of US energy supplies, they are growing at a 30 percent rate compared with 4 percent for oil and 6 percent for natural gas. The projects are especially popular in states with wind farms and farm-belt ethanol refineries. But it's not just a political fad. The cost of many of the alternative fuels is approaching that of oil and natural gas. That competitiveness, combined with congressional renewal of a key tax credit, has business signing contracts to build everything from new wind farms in Iowa to solar farms on top of FedEx terminals.

"This is a period of high fossil-fuel costs and low-interest rates, which gives renewable energy an advantage unlike it's had over the last 20 to 25 years," says George Sterzinger, executive director of the Renewable Energy Policy Project in Washington. "With aggressive development and a reduction in the amount of LNG either through taxes or portfolio standards, by 2020 renewable power could easily be 15 percent of the electric energy produced."

Energy experts say, however, the US will still lag behind Europe, which has plans to produce 10 percent of its power from alternative sources by 2010 and 20 percent by 2020. Denmark, which sits on the windy North Sea, probably leads the world with 20 percent of its electricity currently coming from wind farms. By next year, that will increase to almost 30 percent.

Both Germany and Japan are snapping up much of the world's supply of solar panels. Japan's solar use is growing three times as fast as that of the US, and Germany's twice as fast. "In Germany, they are literally paving farmlands, blocks of land as large as 10 city blocks, with solar panels," says Mike Eckhart, president of the American Council on Renewable Energy in Washington.

In fact, demand is strong for the panels. Rhone Resch, executive director of the Solar Energy Industries Association, estimates individuals who want to buy solar panels might have to wait as long as three months to get them.

Canadians are also taking notice of the potential for wind power. For instance, Hydro-Quebec agreed to buy up to 1,000 megawatts of electricity – enough to heat 200,000 homes – from eight windmill projects in the province. Hydroelectricity will balance the wind-produced electricity, which is not constant, once projects are on line between 2006 and 2012.

Some of the shifting is the result of the volatility of oil and gas prices, says Steve Zwolinski, chief executive officer of GE Energy's wind energy division. "What's changed is energy security and fossil fuel volatility," says Mr. Zwolinski. However, he adds, "This is not just a knee-jerk reaction to a short-term price change, but it's people looking at energy reserves and environmental balance and the need for emerging economies to supply their growing cities."

Even oil companies are jumping on board, using ethanol to augment gasoline supplies. Today, ethanol, which uses 12 percent of the US corn crop, is blended in 30 percent of the nation's fuel. Demand for ethanol is so robust, 12 new plants are under construction and many more are searching for financing to join the 83 already in operation. "It's not just a Midwest fuel anymore," says Bob Dinneen, president of the Renewable Fuels Association in Washington.

In fact, in New York State terminals are blending at a 10 percent level, double what's required for environmental standards. "The reason is it is more cost effective than other petroleum enhancers," says Mr. Dinneen.

Some corporations are also joining in the march to renewables. FedEx added solar cells to its Oakland Airport facility. The company expected the cells to provide 80 percent of its peak load requirements, says Ryan Furby, a company spokesman. The company also acquired more hybrid vehicles that use a combination of diesel engines and lithium batteries, increasing fuel efficiency by 50 percent and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Some consumers, who have been reluctant to shift to renewables, are now doing so as well. Green Mountain Energy, which offers consumers the opportunity to shift to nonpetroleum fuels, always thought its product would appeal to environmentalists. Now the company says it's soccer moms who are buying their product.

"They want a safer future for their kids and kind of view it as a way to do their part," says Tim Smith, a vice president of the Austin, Texas, green-energy company.

News briefs

Toss those vitamins

So you've been tossing back vitamins on the theory that even if they don't do any good (we're all becoming cynics nowadays) they can't do any harm. Guess again. According to a long report in *The Wall Street Journal* (too long for me to finish), vitamins not only often fail to contribute to your health or longevity, they may actually be doing harm.

I'd been hoping for a report denying the virtues of spinach – to subvert the authority of all those mothers who were spinach-nazis – but this is almost as good. There's a large bottle of multivitamins standing on my bedside table, its top almost as fuzzy as the top of my head. I just can't remember to take them (they're huge!), and I think the "best before" date is 2004. Maybe the world is not as irrational as I thought: my subconscious is wiser than my conscious mind. Oh wait – that does make the world irrational.

According to the report, Americans spent over $7 billion on vitamins last year. Just to (potentially) poison themselves. Remember all that hype about antioxidants? I could never remember what they were. Well, forget it: they may actually promote some cancers.

If there is justice in the world, next they'll be telling us that jogging is as bad for you as smoking.

Living longer, more productive lives

Meanwhile an ever larger number of us are living healthier lives past retirement age. That's in spite of all those vitamins and food additives and pollutants and numerous other things denounced as injurious to life in contemporary society. But since more of those in this age bracket are living longer and the number of those in this bracket is rapidly increasing over the next decades, who is going to pay for those trips to Florida in the future?

Recently T.V. programs have been telling stories of people past retirement age who have opted to keep on working. The statistics tell a different story, however. In the U.S. as social security payments increased, so did the percentage of those leaving the work force. Most of us don't like working all that much, it seems.

But if the next generation can't foot the big bill for the retiring baby boomers, the number crunchers warn, some of us will be flipping hamburgers when we're 70 and saying, "Would you like some vitamins with that?"

Becoming more forgetful?

A research team led by Torontonians has discovered a protein that appears to turn off the thingamajigs that cause Alzheimer's disease. The story in *Scientific American* is filled with terms like "amyloid-beta precursor protein" and "gamma-secretase enzymes," so you can tell that they know their business. "Amyloids are the clumps of protein that accumulate and damage nerve cells in the brain, triggering the debilitating symptoms of Alzheimer's," the experts tell us.

"The excitement about [the new discovery] is if we can understand how it works, and we can apply that knowledge ... we might be able to treat the disease," said Paul Fraser, one of the study's authors at the U of Toronto.

And of course don't forget that anyone who has invested in the drug company that figures out how to do it will be rich, rich, rich. So the race for the gold is on. God bless them. I'm having trouble every morning remembering whether or not I've already taken my vitamin pill. Oh yeah – I don't have to worry about that anymore!